# Yesterdays

Revised Edition

# Odds and Ends

Weallha Vieth Abernethy

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To Harry
From Nettie
with Love
Christmas 1948

For a friend
Theatha Veith Abernethy.
11-18-48

# Yesterdays

Revised Edition

# Odds and Ends

WEALTHA VIETH ABERNETHY

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BY
WEALTHA VIETH ABERNETHY
COLUMBUS, OHIO

FIRST PUBLISHED UNDER THE
TITLE OF ODDS AND ENDS

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The F. J. Heer Printing Co.
Columbus, Ohio

1501385

TO

MY HUSBAND AND PARENTS

IN AFFECTIONATE MEMORY

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I WISH to thank the following persons for their generous assistance in the various phases of preparing my little book:

Elizabeth B. Abernethy, a member of the Columbus Branch of the National League of American Pen Women, for the charming illustrations; Winifred Abernethy Brown, for gracious permission to use two of her poems, and for numerous suggestions in the text; the family of G. F. Wittich, for permitting me to include his sketch of Circleville in the old days; Mrs. Howard Jones, for the use of her lovely poem and for her inspiring interest in my efforts; Dr. Joseph Sittler, for permission to use his poetic tribute to my mother; and Margaret Sittler Ermarth, who assisted in preparing the manuscript for press.

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# PREFACE

A SHORT time age, I wrote a little brochure called Odds and Ends. I had it privately printed, and my few extra copies were foisted off on friends most of whom were acquainted with the locale and general atmosphere pervading the book.

The scarcity of paper was a necessary consideration in the making of a book at that time, and I was constrained to leave untold some incidents that I should liked to have touched on in passing, but that would have led me far astray from the course I had chosen.

The title of the little booklet was self-explanatory; it gave away the miscellaneous character of the pages to come without a blush of shame! I had originally intended simply to gratify an unexplained wish to see some of my little poems in print, but I was led on into irresponsible garrulity by the appalling thought that my published poems—set down for posterity on the onion-skin now used by printers for this noble purpose—would resemble nothing so much as a wartime sandwich.

"Odd" it is, to be sure, that I should want to record my life's innuendoes at all; and the "End" is even yet not in sight! But there were many years of compressed activity behind that book, and to be allowed to reminisce is one of the time-honored compensations for growing old.

It may seem queer to some that the fire of my literary genius chose to give out its last sparks in the Division of Motor Vehicles of the Ohio State Highway Department during the hour just before our desks snapped open and the bureaucratic cogs began to turn. But little do you know! First of all, motor vehicles in one form or another (or even without form!) have played a dominant role in my life; secondly, my colleagues have urged me on. And nothing is quite so inspiring to an amateur scribbler as a prospective audience. I promised some stalwarts to autograph their copy

of the masterpiece, but kept my promise for the first week only. I reserved the movie rights also— not only *reserved* them but also *preserved* them against use by future historians, especially those of my family.

I swept on at random from the age of hoopskirts and bustles to the present fashions and times. Of one thing, however, I was sure: I had written no classic. I knew my limits. But I also knew that the moods and yarns of the little book would find some warm understanding hearts not too far away. Its many imperfections I trusted my lenient friends would overlook, and thus provide the writer protection against a killing frost.

The passing years have revealed many changes in our thinking, customs and general way of life.

It is, as I have said, the privilege of old age to tell a tale. Perhaps it is a cosmic necessity that the terminal period of a full and happy life, abounding in faith and humor, must strike off a few minor dissonances before it can resolve itself harmoniously into the last major chord.

With the thought that these tales of Yesterday might appeal to a wider circle of readers, I have revised the book a trifle and incorporated it in a new volume under the title of "Yesterdays" added some additional material and am sending it forth to a trustful public as a breath of fresh air from the "sticks."

---

Life! 'tis ours for but a little while
To gather jewels of love and hope and faith
And then to render back to Him
Who sets enthroned—eternal love—
A consecrated soul.

April 12, 1948

# I

## *A Casual Intrudes the Garden of Eden*

I HAVE always been quite pleased with myself for having picked out for my initial landing so favored a spot on God's earth as Circleville, Ohio. It may be the Pumpkin Show and Ted Lewis who have put the town on the map for the uninitiated, but every native will admit that Circleville exudes a special charm that holds him or pulls him back to a place which someone has called an "Ohio Garden of Eden."

My nieces and nephews, who used to spend summer vacations with us in Circleville, say it is because of the endless variety of sidewalk curbs, jutting stones, and little low border walls—all of which I wager have borne more juvenile foot-traffic than Holland's dikes! Others say it is the magic spell of the superb Indian summers which is laid across their memories and hearts to bind them to the place. And, indeed, the golden mists and mellow warmth of the retiring sun in the early fall, combined with the pungent odor of burning leaves, do summon up for the inhabitants of this historic region colorful and realistic visions of the Red Man, who once roamed these fertile plains.

It was the richness and beauty of the Pickaway Plains which lured the white man here, too, and which precipitated several momentous battles between his advance guard and the Indians. Indian lore and history are so closely woven into the fabric of this whole region that it is difficult to write anything with Circleville and its environs as a setting without first taking cognizance of the long since departed Red Man.

Of course you may think it is a far cry from Redskins to me, but I cannot help that. My span of life is quite lengthy and local history is my pet vice. So I just have to begin any epistle of this kind with a reference to the Indians.

The Mound Builders preceded the nomadic Indians in this region, of course, and they left ample and impressive evidence of their skill and reverence for the Hereafter scattered all over the Pickaway region.

The name "Pickaway" is a perversion of the name of the Piqua tribe of the Shawanese Indians who came to be the most closely associated with the fertile Plains region in the mind of the white man. Here the chiefs of the allied tribes met around the council fires; here the Indians brought their captives for torture and vengeance; here was fought the bloody battle of Point Pleasant; here was the terminus of Lord Dunmore's campaign to end the Indian wars on the Scioto in 1774; and here, finally, was made the most famous of all utterances of an Indian in the white man's tongue—Logan's eloquent and moving plea to Dunmore for peace.

This speech with its closing eloquent words "Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one!" were spoken beneath a huge elm tree, now called the Logan Elm, situated on the old Boggs farm about six miles south of Circleville, and is as follows:

> "I appeal to any white man to say, if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry and he gave him not meat; if ever he came cold and naked and he clothed him not. During the course of the last long and bloody war, Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites that my countrymen pointed as they passed and said, 'Logan is the friend of white men,' I had even thought to live with you but for the injuries of one man. Col. Cresap the last spring in cold blood and unprovoked murdered all the relatives of Logan; not sparing even his women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This called on me for revenge. I have sought it. I have killed many. I have fully glutted my vengeance. For my country, I rejoice at the beams of peace. Yet do not harbor the thought that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. He will not turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one."

Neighbors of mine in Circleville, Dr. and Mrs. Howard Jones, whose rich knowledge of Indian history was surpassed only by their public spirit, long ago became avidly interested in preserving the historic old tree, and one of their interested friends, Miss Elizabeth Ruggles, made possible the purchase of the site. Eventually it was presented to the State of Ohio, in whose care and custody it now rests. In 1912 the first Sunday in October (Note: Indian summer weather!) was set apart as "Ohio History Day," and an annual pilgrimage to the old tree became a tradition. Even during

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these last war years, in spite of the travel restrictions, well over a thousand people came on that day to hear again Logan's speech. Mrs. Jones acted as voluntary president of the Ohio History Day Association for many years, and for the last several years has been president emeritus.

The little city of Circleville was laid out in 1810 as a seat of justice for the Pickaway Plains region. An octagonal courthouse graced and formed the center orbit from which the streets radiated like the spokes of a wheel. The town itself was raised on the site of ancient fortifications, one of which was circular. The contours of this structure were evident in the town for many years, but in 1841 the courthouse was destroyed, and with the disappearance of this primary landmark of the old "Circle-ville" there began the gradual erasure of the old town center. The circular arrangement was later considered inconvenient for the trade of the hitching-post days, and the circle was squared off into sections. This drastic gesture toward efficiency—this urge to be "square," along with the rest of the world—was costly in terms of tradition and atmosphere, but, happily, enough remained that vestiges of the town's origin could be seen by us as children. I distinctly remember an ancient brick house which was the last unit remaining in the old circle. It was the home of Dr. W. B. Hawkes, who founded Mt. Carmel Hospital in Columbus.

## Circleville, Ohio, as it Appeared in 1836



Original Drawing by Mr. G. F. Wittich

(Copyrighted by Edward Wittich, 1919).

One cannot dwell very long on the subject of Circleville without touching on the *Pumpkin Show!* It is a unique version of the more generally known county fair, and has been widely copied. Mr. George R. Haswell, who was Mayor of Circleville at the time, conceived the brilliant idea of having a pumpkin show, and organized the first one in 1903 A bumper crop of pumpkins and other farm products was displayed in front of his place of business and all along the main streets of the city; business houses co-operated and beautifully decorated the fronts of their business establishments with grasses and fodder, and from this modest beginning the idea expanded into an annual fall festival of great color and vivacity. It is held on the main streets of the city, and is free to all.

There are no entry fees or administrative charges, but the show manages nevertheless to be self-sustaining.

Of late years there is usually a large pyramid of pumpkins at the intersection of the two main streets of the city. The displays are many and varied. Business houses are decorated, prizes are offered for about every conceivable achievement and the parades are a thing of beauty.

The Pumpkin Show is a demonstration of local pride which also furnishes an occasion for home-coming. One of the favorite activities is for friends and older residents to meet and talk over the days of yesterday.

The pumpkin is very symbolic of all I've been trying to say about the atmosphere of Circleville, come to think of it! Its form is appropriate; it represents the great fertility and fruitfulness of the surrounding farm-lands; its color and origin are suggestive of the incomparable Indian summers of which we boast, and of the Indian who first cultivated the plant.

Some years ago, a prize was offered in Circleville for the best essay on the Pumpkin Show. We were very proud when a daughter of our home produced the following description in verse:

## CALL TO ARMS

Come to the pumpkin show tonight
For all the beauties will be there,
Red apples, gourds, and Hubbard squash—
It's like a county fair!
The farmer brings his china pigs,
His Jersey heifer, too;
He brings along some rare old hops,
The kind that makes the brew.
His wife brings in some Leghorn hens,
A butter pat and cake;
For all the wives are interested
In what each other makes.
The farmer brings potatoes, yams,
Apples, plums, and pears.
Peaches, apriots, and corn,
And his best clothes he wears.
Our Johnny raised a huge pumpkin,
And Sally made a quilt,
And Granny thought she'd send some flowers,
But she just knew they'd wilt.
Mother took a lot of pains
When she made jam and jell;
She said, of course, her chocolate cake
Would take the prize and sell.
Poor Sammy's crop of fine pop corn
Was covered with his coat;
He thought he'd bring that to the show;
'Twas in his Nanny goat!
Rabbits, dogs, and kitty cats,
Turkeys, ducks, and geese
Jammed up against an eating house
When someone calls, Police!
The girls bring in their fancy work;
The boys make queer bird nests;
The schools send in a fine display
Of all the hardest tests.
'Tis surely one fine gathering,
Our famous Pumpkin Show,
So call up all your neighbors
And say "Come on, let's go!"

—*Winifred Abernethy Brown*

Before I introduce myself too prominently into this story, it would seem appropriate to mention, at least, certain people who have brought distinction and honor to Circleville. The range of their services is wide, and their characters colorful and varied.

John Cradlebaugh, who was born in Circlveille in 1817, practiced law there, and represented Pickaway and Franklin Counties for a time in the Ohio State Senate, eventually was appointed a judge of the United States District Court for Utah Territory, and in this capacity was renowned for his great courage in trying to bring to justice the persons implicated in the Mountain Meadow Massacre. He later represented the Territory of Nevada in Congress, but returned to Pickaway County at the outbreak of the Civil War and raised a company of soldiers. He was so severely wounded that he could no longer practice law and died later in Nevada. He is buried in Forest Cemetery in the shadow of the beautiful monument he had erected in 1852 as a tribute to his wife.

Ohio's earliest historian, Caleb Atwater, lived in Circleville the greater part of his life, and it was the prevalence of so many of the prehistoric relics in the little town that first turned his attention from law to history and archaeology. His *Archaeologia Americana* won international attention.

Ornithology and art profited greatly from the contributions of our next candidates for Circleville's Hall of Fame: Genevieve E. Jones and Eliza J. Shultze, who initiated the project of illustrating and describing the nests and eggs of all birds native to Ohio. When Genevieve Jones died in the course of the work, her mother learned to draw and paint so she could complete the book. Her father, Dr. N. E. Jones, assisted in the venture, and her brother, Dr. Howard Jones, wrote the 300 pages of text from original field notes. The two volumes of the rare, beautiful, and justly famous book contain illustrations of 130 species of birds and their nests and eggs. The illustrations are lithographs, drawn by hand on stone and then colored by hand from the print, and the work has the reputation of being the most superb product of its kind in existence.

The romantic and tragic figure of Frances Abernethy Reeder, my husband's niece, graced still another field of human endeavor. After her graduation from Ohio Wesleyan University she went to China to join her intended husband, a Presbyterian missionary in Weihsien, Shantung Province. Her selfless devotion to the cause of improving the living conditions of the natives and her intelligent

and sympathetic understanding of their problems endeared her to them all. Many of her hymns are to be found in Homer Rodeheaver's hymnal and songbooks. Her winsome, kindly, affectionate nature won for her countless friends and her early death saddened many hearts. She now rests in the foreign field of her labors. I like to think of her as . . . .

One who carried to a foreign field
The story of the Cross.
Consecrated and humble
In her Redeemer's work,
She gave the last full measure
Of devotion to His Call.
A cheery, gifted, noble woman,
Who, for a while, has gone to rest
In the glory of His smile.

The name, personality, and public services of "Ted Lewis" are too well known to warrant anything but a local touch in this sketch. He is one of those who never forgets Circleville and makes frequent references to the city of his birth in his stage appearances and broadcasts. His cheerful query "Is everybody happy?" usually starts off a superior program of musical entertainment. I have known him from his earliest childhood and have always respected him especially for his marked devotion to his mother. During her lifetime he called her on the telephone almost every evening no matter where he was.

He was very much interested in seeing that Circleville should have a Public Park, and gave generously for its purchase and development. It bears his name and is an honor both to him and his home city. He has aided many other worthy projects and is considered Circleville's Number One Citizen and is held in high esteem by all.

And so here is Circleville—a quiet and busy little city in the Middle West, near enough to its frontier history and origin so as never to have lost the flavor of adventure, and still old enough to have achieved a settled character as the Ohio Garden of Eden, the jewel of the Pickaway Plains!

Now that I have invaded the fields of history and biography just long enough to establish the proper setting, I feel free to bring on the main character in this highly personalized account!



I was born in the heart of Circleville. My mother said that I began my career just as the dinner bell of the Old American Hotel, across the street from our house, was summoning its patrons to dinner, and that she had never known me to be late to dinner since!

My mother was a generous and affectionate soul, so I have to assume that she loved me along with other babies, but I must have been a shock to her. True, I did present the orthodox blue eyes—but, oh no, no curly hair. I was of the snub-nosed, stringy hair variety, with an inquiring and inquisitive bent from the first. Poor mother, who was in the millinery business at the time of my advent, had free rein in experimenting with me and all varieties of baby bonnets, hats, and caps. Her efforts to suit my individual style were magnificent but in vain, and I have struggled even unto this present day to meet up with my idea of the perfect hat! It has been a problem to me all my life. I'm sure I have spent as long a time looking for a becoming hat as Diogenes for an honest man, and considerable more money!

My search for THE HAT has been a sore spot in my life, a rich source of all kinds of remarks from my relatives, a lively cause of deflated purses, and fruitless to boot. When I was sixteen I took advantage of the prevailing custom of using a "rat" in my hair to make it appear thicker, and I plaited the thin golden strands down to the last common denominator to make it appear long, but it was of no use. The longer my dresses, the shorter my tresses, so to speak! Mother, good soul that she was, loyally defended my good points, but I must have given her many an anxious moment.

A friend of my parents had asked the privilege of "naming the baby," and they let him. That is how I happened to be called "Wealthä." He even wanted to call me "Wealtha Bell" after his

mother, but my mother drew the line at "Bell," so they finally compromised by removing the "B" from the front and tacking an "A" on the end, and there I was launched forth in the world as "Wealtha Ella." My mother called me "Faye" until I reached the age of fifteen or thereabouts. But I'll have to confess an odd liking for my odd name. It has caused me lots of trouble, though. To begin with, too many of the people who know me call me "Wealth*y*," which hurts my sensitive ears (at least when I could hear); secondly, almost all casual mail has been addressed to me as *Mr.* Wealtha Vieth or Abernethy. Apparently there must be some male element in this name, although I could never see it, and certainly it has an authentic reputation as a perfectly good old Quaker female name. In any event, one day as I was crossing Main Street I halted for traffic and was suddenly accosted by a torrent of colorful and abusive language, all addressed apparently to me. But when I recovered from the first shock of hearing my name catapulted about in the company of choice swear words, I realized that the verbal shots were directed at a young colored man on a dray immediately in front of me! I recognized in him the grandson of "Aunt Lizzie," our old laundress about whose wash tubs I had played and who was very fond of me as a child. Anyway, "Wealtha" I was named and have remained. My sponsor at the baptism had brought along with him out of the Civil War a lovely old silver bowl (probably confiscated from some Southern home) which he said a superior officer had given him for safe-keeping. It is now a prized possession of my niece Wealtha A. BeVier. When the officer was killed, my sponsor retained the bowl, and I and succeeding generations have been baptised from it. I've often wondered whether my love for antiques was predisposed by the environment of the water that was poured over my innocent head on that fateful name-day.

Recently I had occasion to come into intimate contact with one of these perfect dream babies which I distinctly wasn't. I took care of my niece's three-months-old baby for a few hours and was so charmed by her that I penned the following lines for her baby book:

## TO BARBARA

A little sunbeam came our way
To bless our hearts and lives,
To link us with Infinity
A little soul divine.

With eyes so blue and tender too,
A smile so innocent,
With faith supreme and love sublime
To teach us how to live.

That we may too, just as a child
Walk humbly with our God;
With faith and love, humility,
Gain Immortality.

For He who made the universe,
Fashioned immortal souls,
Will watch and wait our coming home,
Just as a little child.

# II

## *"As the Twig Is Bent"*

WHENEVER my thoughts wander back to my home and my childhood, I am apt to find them most heavily concentrated on the experience of Christmas. Christmas with us wasn't just a holiday, not even just a holy day. It was, as I said, an experience, and the hero of the family festival was my father. It was the advent of us children that set him off, for until my elder sister arrived, Circleville had never seen a Christmas tree. But on the occasion of her first Christmas he sent to Virginia for a real spruce cedar, summoned up the memories of the traditional *Weihnachtsbaum* as he had known it as a child in the land of his birth, and produced for his little daugher—and for Circleville—their first Christmas tree.



Ornaments could not be purchased, so he proceeded to make them. Large walnuts were covered with gold and silver paper, and reflectors for the candles were cut from tin. A bright red cranberry was impaled on a pin and attached to the end of each spike

of cedar; candles in shining tin holders were clamped to the boughs of the tree, and long strings of popcorn swung in great loops from one graceful branch to another. Under the tree a sheet was spread to catch the falling wax; a minute picket fence enclosed a host of small animals which father had carved and placed in an unforgetable pastoral scene. But, wonder of wonders to us children was the little bisque angel suspended by a rubber band from the ceiling just above the tip of the tree. She bobbed up and down and seemed to float around animated by the current of warm air that rose from the candle flames. My father would have scorned the modern streamlined, stylized electrically lighted Christmas tree. His tree was the creation of his own skilled and meticulously careful hand, gay and yet awesome, informal and abundantly colorful, yet graceful and dignified. The tree was usually placed in front of a long pier-mirror, thus reflecting a duplicate of itself in all its beauty.

You may be sure we were willing to retire early, after attaching our stockings to the mantel in anticipation of a visit from dear old Santa Claus who never failed us.

We were light sleepers, and father was sure to have us up at 5 A. M. and the tree lighted so that the passersby on their way to church could gather in front of our home or at a side window, and get a glimpse of the wonderfully lighted tree.



The hushed expectancy on Christmas morning familiar to most families with children, was heightened for us by the invariable ritual of lining up before the door to the "Parlor," in strict accordance with age, the little ones first, of course. Discipline was strict, but nothing could restrain the excited whispers and anticipatory squeaks that thrilled up and down that line! Not even a peep at the tree, however, before we had sung the beloved old German Christmas song:

"O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum
Wie gruen sind deine Blaetter!
Do Gruenst nicht nur zur Sommerzeit
Nein, auch in Winter wenn es schneit.
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum
Wie gruen sind deine Blaetter!"

Our presents, like those of the Easter tradition, were placed in many corners, and we were not long in discovering our own particular spot.

I remember so well, my sister and I both wanted a sled and directed our dear Santa where to look for them. As our wants, if modest, were usually fulfilled, there, on Christmas morning were the two beauties. The weather being favorable my sister was off with her lovely bent wood sled like a deer, so light and easily guided, while mine was like a balky mule; it had *iron* runners, and when I had a passenger I was always in low gear or frozen fast in the snow. Its gaudy coloring, green and red, had looked so enticing through that window, that I had failed to notice details. Looks sometimes are deceptive.

Ornaments, tinsel and reflectors of great glory may come and go, but nothing can efface the thrill that accompanied those first Christmas trees. The incense from the burning wax and cedar is still strong in my memory. And to this day, we children grown old still look forward to seeing the little bird-nest with its little blue bird and three eggs, created for the first tree, make its annual debut on the tree of a family member. It has thus far adorned eighty Christmas trees.

Wonderful dreams of childhood, wherein we found mystery, contentment and pleasure, until some whispered word was spoken breaking the illusion of innocence and trust.

As I look back on those years of blessed memories, with their carols and hosannas ringing down the corridor of time, heralding the coming of the Holy Babe of Bethlehem, I wonder if we are appreciative of our great inheritance.

Glorious days of childhood, fellowship, and makeshift, walking hand in hand, an everlasting memory of the celebration of the birthday of our Lord!

As I intimated, father always had the Christmas situation well in hand when we were children, but as we grew older we began to intrude on his sacred precinct. In this process great tragedy over-

took us once. My sister and I had decided that we would present father with a new phonograph on Christmas, and to make it a real surprise we had crept into the parlor after the tree had been trimmed and stockings hung on Christmas eve, and placed the phonograph under the tree set up ready to play "Silent Night, Holy Night." We were as excited as children in anticipation of the effect of *our* surprise on Christmas morning.

Well, everything went off as usual. The children were taken care of, the great song duly sung, and then came the moment! My sister nodded to me and I nodded back and stealthily pushed the lever which released the turntable. But instead of the glorious strains of that heavenly melody, there issued forth such agonized groans and moans as I have never heard before or since. My sister and I looked at each other in pained silence, and our father was visibly upset by this crass and horrible intrusion into the joyous Christmas celebration. Our fatal error was soon discovered. We had placed the phonograph directly beneath some candles, and the hot wax had dripped steadily here and there all over Mr. Edison's fine machine and the record. I've often thought that somebody missed a splendid opportunity to make a good crack about our enthusiasm waxing and waning so suddenly, but I guess the Christmas spirit had softened the edges of our bright wits that morning.

Next to Christmas, probably the most vivid memories of childhood and early youth concentrate around Wittich's candy store. Now, no one realizes better than I that candy and children make no new and startling combination. But one did not just run into Wittich's with a penny or a nickel and run out again with candy. One sort of enrolled, matriculated, and graduated in the sweet arts! I suppose the number of mature people now living in Circleville and countless other places who bear nostalgic degrees from Wittich's would do credit to many a large academic institution. It was the candy cane which really spread the fame of Wittich's far and wide, I think, but I personally remember most poignantly the superb Boston chips. However, before I progressed to that high level there was a long interval, which we might call the "pinafore era," during which we small ones spent a good part of our out-door time with our noses pressed against Mr. Wittich's window. (This solemn activity incidentally was definitely the wrong one for my brand of snub nose!) Sometimes we had a warm and damp penny or nickel in our pocket and very often we had none. But there we stood, we could not do otherwise! Enured as he must have been to this perpetual external battery of eyes and noses, kindly old Mr.

Wittich often paid us the supreme compliment of extending credit to us, and was invariably warmly attentive to the wants of small fry.

The name of "Wittich" has always been closely associated with most of Circleville's major activities and institutions. Mr. G. F. Wittich, who drew the map of Circleville in 1836, shown earlier in this book, was one of the oldest citizens of the city. His son, T. K. Wittich, organized the renowned Wittich band, which held forth on practically every occasion of moment: torchlight processions, funerals, welcoming delegations at home, and leading delegations abroad. My father was a member of the original band and its last surviving member.

I remember vividly that the torchlight processions of my youth were brilliant affairs, especially those of a political character. Local feeling ran high. With the famous Wittich's band to lead us, we were usually on hand with our father to carry a transparency or a torch. If it was a Democratic affair, father was sure to be in evidence and when he would be obliged to walk up in front and "TOOT" his B Flat Cornet, he would transfer the transparency to my willing hands. I was not expert in twirling the four-faced beauty, but I did my best to let all the curbstone gentry see the potent words of the slogans it bore. I felt sure that this demonstration would be the determining factor in winning the election of our favorite candidate. Our torches were the last word in illumination. We did not have spot lights or flash cameras, but with the aid of some giant firecrackers and roman candles we were on the spot. We were ardent partisans for our side of the discussion.

My earliest recollection of my pre-school years was concerned with my strenuous efforts to skip the rope, the one hundred times usually set as a goal; to roll a hoop (no doubt a discarded buggy rim); to walk on stilts,—to use our grace hoops with their cunning little sticks,—to engage in the game of hop-scotch and blind-man's buff. An extraordinary amount of our dexterity was exercised in the attempt to avoid stepping on all cracks in the brick sidewalks, so as to defeat the old superstition of bad luck. This feat was especially difficult after a heavy rain when the fishworms were out in full force. Later we engaged in the famous old game of ring-around-a-rosie, and had inevitably to make sure that the "London Bridge" was falling down.

In the winter season we were sure to attach our sleds to some friend's cutter. Once a few friends and myself "hitched on" to

our doctor's vehicle, who usually waited for us, and were taken to the edge of town where he remained the best part of an hour. When our faces were cracked with cold, we lost all enthusiasm over any invitation to "hitch on"to any vehicle whose destination was beyond the inner circles of the town.

The gingham pinafore remained the uniform of small folk in my day for school as well as home wear, usually made in sack apron style with ties in the back.

I liked nothing better in the world at the age of ten than to play "crack-the-whip." To meet up with my whip-cracking outfit in time to get in on the game, I had to leave for school very early. At that I usually managed to get in on the tail end of the whip, and more often than not, my pin-a-fore was pinned both fore and aft by the time I arrived at school. Somehow or other I always associate it with my prevailing bad habit of getting places much too early. Even my friends and colleagues in the Bureau of Motor Vehicles tossed off a facetious question as they scampered past my desk, "Been here all night?" In any event at this tender age I became set in my practice of arriving early, and I have never recovered.

Apparently I exhausted all my surplus energy before entering the primary halls of learning, for, as I remember, I had to stand in the corner only once for misbehavior—a bit drab and uninteresting, I must say. This remarkable sedateness didn't mean, however, that I was to become studious. Oh, no! In that my fond family was to be sadly disillusioned. Still, I made the "grades" pretty well, and remained frozen in only one class for what I shall delicately call a "review," or a "second glance." My mind was clear and unadulterated; I didn't bother to clutter it up with the tedious details of the thought process. Perhaps that is why I had so good a memory, so good in fact that I could lean on it for almost all classroom emergencies commonly known as tests and recitations.

But eventually I got in trouble by wearing my simple device for learning too thin and was led to my first public humiliation.

In those days it was the custom to invite parents to attend the oral examinations in the grammar schools, and the parents were almost always inconsiderate enough to appear. My own understanding and generous mother, however, was one of the few who never put in an appearance on these painful occasions. I'm sure it was all for the best, but I remember feeling that she might just once come and triumph with her daughter in her rendition of the

history of the battle between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*. Part of this recitation dealt with the respective technical merits of the two fearful sea monstors, and it was no small trick to keep the story straight. But this kind of thing was right up my alley. I sailed through my recitation with great aplomb and without a moment's hesitation. Highly self-satisfied I sat back to receive my just rewards. And they were not long in coming! The next day the superintendent of schools, a patient and earnest schoolmaster who had the ambition for his pupils *to learn,* called on my mother to take up the matter of Wealtha and higher learning. He started out with infinite tact by assuring her that her daughter had a most astonishing memory. It was amazing, very unusual; no word, comma, or semicolon would be overlooked in my rendition of difficult passages, etc., etc. BUT, had I been stopped in the middle of my oration by some external force for a clear and concise statement of the substance and meaning of all the words and sentences that tripped so glibly off my tongue, I would have been completely stumped. A *failure,* in other words.

My edges fairly curled up in indignation at this forthright and caustic analysis of my primary weakness. I failed to appear at our Crack-the-Whip orgies for fully two weeks and sank within myself for a thoroughgoing, juvenile, and *very* serious soul-searching and overhauling. These blows fall with terrifying earnestness upon young heads, but I can only say that that schoolmaster saved me from a fate worse than that of a phonograph! I made a prodigious effort to start thinking things through at that point. Not that it has got me anywhere much, but I shudder to think where I might have landed had I crowned and terminated my intellectual achievements at the level of my recital on the *Monitor* and *Merrimac.*

In later years this much maligned and overworked memory came to be of great service to me. For, as a court reporter, I could separate the voices of the lawyers all seeking to ask questions at the same time, and, although often two or three questions behind, I could always catch up with them accurately in my report.

My report cards, memory notwithstanding, were a source of great annoyance to me. Here was the other moment of importance where my father reigned supreme. These cards unfailingly caused my father to reveal the other side of the character that presided so genially over the Christmas celebrations. I tried all the known devices to absent myself until he had had a chance to read and sign the card and to *forget* about it. Usually I attempted to hide somewhere but to be busily engaged the while in some worthy task, so

that, if discovered by my irate parent, my punishment might at least be mitigated by my industriousness. On one memorable occasion, I hied myself to the grape-arbor at the noon hour where I set about busily powdering a brick to atoms so that I could scour and sharpen all the steel knives of the culinary department. But father was hitting on all eight that day, and finally flushed me out of my hiding place with never a glance at my impressive row of razor-edged knives! My pinafore swung aft that day, too, and it wasn't nearly as much fun as "Cracking the Whip."

High school never appeared to me in any other light than a needless interruption to — I knew not quite what. I struggled through the first two years in faithful observance of my earlier resolution to start learning in earnest, but I could not reconcile my idea of my future with the necessity for declining *mensa*. My hope of mastering a classical course grew faint, and even my parents were finally convinced that it was sheer waste of time to keep me in school. I hate to admit it, but it may well be that the *Fireside Companion*, a lurid pulp of that day, was not conducive to collective thought, and contributed more than a little to my lack of interest in higher education.

My younger sister went on to graduate, and I lived in reflected academic glory until she finished. When she graduated she not only wrote the class song but also delivered one of the two orations given on graduation day. I was twice as agitated as she over the prospect of her performance. The oration was titled "The Maid of Bregenz," and both oration and the orator were fully up to par. Nevertheless, I felt called upon as an elder sister to go to great lengths to guarantee that her performance would be superlative. The evening before graduation we held a rehearsal in our bedroom, and I sought to exercise her in the gestures then considered proper for a public speaker. I placed the coal-oil lamp on the floor in front of my obliging and patient victim, and hoped thereby to accustom her to "glaring" footlights! I paced back and forth in front of her like a caged lion tossing its mane to acquaint her with a distracting, restless audience! The night of the performance I was agog with excitement, and from my place in the dress circle I awaited my sister's appearance on the stage with bated breath. I knew every word of her oration and apparently *spoke it* right along with her, for friends of ours who sat just back of me told me the following day that they could hardly listen to the oration so amused were they by my silent rendition of the same. They said they wanted to

lean over and tell me to take it easy, but were afraid I wouldn't or couldn't heed anybody at that point.

Somewhat later, I was privileged to sit in that same seat at the Circleville Opera House as a result of my own activity. I could never resist an offer of a prize and one had been offered by the manager of the Opera House for the best essay on a favorite character in *Little Women,* which was currently being produced there as a play. The daily paper even printed my essay, and as a means of preserving my early effort and to counterbalance the *Monitor*-and-*Merrimac* slur on my abilities, I include it here. I particularly wish you to notice how they advertised in those days, just split my essay right in the middle, so that the public could not help but know the show was on. It is as follows:

"WINNER OF LITTLE WOMEN PRIZE CONTEST"

How our minds turn backward to childhood's days, when we neglected everything to steal a few more minutes with our well--thumbed copy of *"Little Women."* Each character, how it impressed us, and how unconsciously perhaps its wholesome influence remained a treasured memory. Each in their place, Meg, the gentle, home-loving daughter; Amy, the beauty and artistic member of the family; Little Beth, the frail, fragile flower, early called. And then dear big, dependable Jo, the power behind the throne; with determination giving her thoughts and life to the creation of her stories; with her literary genius, aiding the family income, and big with sacrifices, even to losing her glorious hair for the "Cause." How she stands out. Reared in the pure atmosphere of that parsonage home, where good thoughts and gentle breeding went hand in hand; where her love for books could find full play. How well she built her character of love and unselfishness, the traits that shine out bright and clear and made big her life and those who came within the shadow of her influence.

"TO BE SEEN AT THE GRAND TONIGHT"

influence. And on reaching womanhood, how tenderly she deals with her dear Larry, and when love at last reaches her great unselfish heart when she can love and yet serve, she joins her beloved professor, and within the walls of Plumfield, mothers not only her own little flock, but reaches out and loves Joe's boys, rounding out a life made glorious in the service of others."

Jo was the idol of my childhood. I even to this day often turn

to that well-worn classic and find comfort and quiet strength in her sturdy character.

It is impossible in the brief compass of a single chapter, to do more than touch the surface of tender memories that cluster round my mother's life, and if I have left the subject of my mother until last in this blitz-survey of childhood and youth, it is only because her character does not lend itself to this style. Her presence and influence were so all-pervading that I find it difficult to place her neatly and appropriately at all in a book bearing the title of this one! You could get a good idea of my father by the episodic treatment such as I have given him in describing our Christmas-tree festival, and the report-card debacle. But not mother! She requires book-length treatment at least. Suffice it to say that her clear and steady gaze looked upon the hopes and fears, the foibles and fancies, achievements, failures, and tragedies of several generations of family and fellow-humans, without once flinching or even being surprised. And at the same time her heart and hands were open to all. The warmth of her spirit was the hearth of our home, and spread far beyond that threshold to bless friend and casual stranger alike.

In contemplating her ways one day, I wrote the following little tribute:

## OUR MOTHER

Who so winsome, so bonnie, so true, and so brave
As our dear mother, day after day;
Watching and guiding the footsteps of loved ones,
As they follow life's pathway
From cradle to grave.

No hand so tender, no heart so true,
Correcting, encouraging, and loving us too;
Sharing alike both our sorrows and joys,
Leading us upward and onward
To God to be true.

Facing life's duties with prayer and with praise,
For the One who redeems us from life's erring ways;
And when at last she steals softly away,
How we miss her dear presence
Day after day.

Gone to join with the Angels in song and in praise
To welcome her dear ones in Heaven's fair lays;
Where with God's Holy Angels forever we may
Lift our voices in worship
Of our Creator and Lord.



## TO OUR DEAR GRANDMA

They told us 'Grandma's dead'!
And with these words there sped
Into our little hearts a cruel arrow
Of pain, regret, and sorrow.

For we shall miss your kindly face,
Your greetings and your loving ways.
But you are gone just for a while
To where the baby angels smile,
To live with them until we come
And God our Father calls us home.

So you are gone to realm of bliss!
You whose fond caress and loving kiss
Was first to soothe us—We are sad—
You, first and dearest friend we ever had.

Oh, sad we are in our childish way
Oh, sadder yet we'll be some day,
When on life's journey we shall crave
For holy love such as grandma gave.

You were the first, shall we forget?
To clasp our tiny forms and soothe the baby fret,
For e'en before we Mother love had known
Grandmother love had claimed it for its own.

So fare thee well! "Auf Wiedersehen;"
This thought alone allays the pain;
God bless you, load you with His joys,
This is our wish—your girls and boys.

—Walter, Mary, Joseph, Louis, and Margaret



When she died, her son-in-law, Dr. Joseph Sittler, wrote the foregoing poem in her memory on behalf of his children, all of whom our mother had attended in their first days of life.

But to the moods of this book even the serene dignity of my mother's life can yield certain fitting episodes. One of my most vivid early memories was of the time we almost lost mother. The whole family had gone in a body to see how our modest little Scioto River had suddenly overflowed its banks and turned into a veritable sea! We had reached the point where the canal is carried across the river on what was then known as the "aqueduct" when my sister let an apple fall into the water. With an unconscious gesture my mother sought to catch it, lost her balance, and fell onto a loose cake of ice which was about to wend its way into the aqueduct and through the old covered bridge to the locks where the canal was lowered to proceed on its way. We frantically called to her to keep absolutely quiet so that the ice cake would not tip over, and by-standers quickly tied together a chain of umbrellas with which the ice with its precious burden was gently propelled to shore. It seemed then in the excitement of the moment that myriads of willing hands were awaiting her.

Our father and mother went off together to Cincinnati to visit the exposition, and came back bearing a somewhat incoherent story about mother's escapade on the "Shoot-the-Chutes." It seemed that she was so fascinated by the whizzing little cars that sped down into the water from a great height, that almost without announcing her intention she made for one of them and was all set to go before father realized what she was doing. He frantically called her to come back, and watched breathlessly as she splashed into the water —and survived! Her delight with the new experience was so keen that she was determined to try it again, so father finally said that, well, if she was so set on going to Kingdom Come, he might as well be with her, so they both went down the "chutes" and were still dizzy with the sensations hours afterwards. I remember that we were all mean enough to capitalize on that story by chanting frequently that, if couples in their staid fifties could gambol about in this light manner, a few indiscretions of their children could be overlooked with good grace!

Immediately thereafter my sisters and a cousin and I were permitted to visit the same exposition. After elaborate preparations and minute instructions we set forth. Among other advice we were cautioned to ask directions of no one but a policeman, and we

were carefully schooled in how to find the home of a friend with whom we were to spend the night. There was to be an unmistakable landmark in the form of a log cabin on a crucial corner, I remember. Well, after we had seen all we could see, we began to search for our friend's home late at night. The log cabin which was to guide us had somehow suddenly multiplied itself all over the place until there was one on every corner. Somewhat abashed by this uncomfortable fact, we dutifully hunted up a policeman who listened kindly to our excited chatter and questions, and finally herded us off in the right direction. I can still see his rotund figure shaking with amusement at the consternation of four lost maidens from the "sticks." When we arrived at home, we had to face a one-woman board of inquiry on how we could possibly have used so much butter during the short time she and father had been away at the exposition. We finally confessed that our cooking had been a bit sketchy, but we had made butterscotch twice a day! I dearly loved butterscotch and the latest thriller, and I promised myself both treats when I should arrive at the age of independence. (I presume I meant the marriage state.) But, alas, time moves on, and with it comes curbs; now, when there is no longer sugar rationing I cannot have "sweets" for reasons of health,—and since my eyes are on the blink,—I cannot have "thrillers." My advice, therefore, is to take things as they come along—tomorrow is very illusive. We didn't have the courage to tell her, however, that we had stayed up all night once to read a detective thriller, *Shadowed by Three!* We took turns reading aloud until we were all hoarse, and finally wound up with the villain's identity at 4 A. M. Mother would not have liked that!

# III

## *Golden Youth*

THAT STRANGE category of human beings of the female variety currently known as "Bobby Soxers" was unknown in my youth. At that remote time a tenuous, tremulous line between girlhood and maidenhood fell somewhat near the age of seventeen, and manners, speech, dress, and all that goes to make up the personal atmosphere almost unconsciously conspired to create another dimension to our already interesting world. Not that anything spectacular or especially remarkable occurred, for our duties as well as our pleasures were circumscribed firmly by the usages of the time.

Reading was usually confined to the Bible and Pilgrim's Progress, and our entertainment at the theater to the Swiss Family Robinson. Our card playing to Casino, and Old Maid. Horse and buggy drives, and events at the churches and schools were almost our only "outside" pleasures. The rest of our social activities were centered about our own or a friend's home, and usually about the piano. Out of the general glow that emanates from this incomparable period of youth stands out in my memory one important exception to the norm—and what an exception it was!

Do you remember Peck's Hall, you Circlevillians, at the corner of Court and Main Streets, on the third floor? Do you remember how the sweet and exhilarating strains of the famous minuets and waltzes used to drift toward us as we came swinging down the street, or how we heard the pleasant and rhythmic rumble of hundred of well-oiled wheels bearing their enthusiastic light-footed burdens merrily round and round the hall? I may be a confirmed old-fashionist in this one respect, but I have yet to see on the faces of dancing seventeeners of the present day the sustained rapture that was stamped on our physiognomies as we waited for "Alamand Left" and "Alamand Right," called out by a tireless old fiddler who knew his audience.

My sisters and myself were usually members of a local cast of players and singers when "Pinafore" or "Pirates of Penzance,"

were put on the boards by local organizations or other public spirited citizens.

We also sang in the Choral Society, where the great Messiah Chorus was a well remembered classic, certain to tax our limited accomplishments, but not our enthusiasm.

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My sisters were fine dancers, especially when the old favorite the "Blue Danube," or other waltz was played so tunefully. They never suffered for partners—cannot say so much for myself—my card wasn't always completely filled; but, if the "Gallop" was the key note of the party, I was in demand. I was "tops" in that.

I remember my brother coming in one evening all in a flutter stating he was taking his current flame to the dance, and that he could not gallop, and would I hurry up and teach him the step. I rose to the occasion, grasped him in my arms and away we went to the one-two-three rat-a-tat-tat with our feet, to a whistled tune. We had three rooms in a row about fifty feet space and we had a perfect setting. On the way back from where we first landed, he took me on a run back to the front door, and with an exciting voice asked me "to do it again." I told him the going back was a pure waste of energy—all we had to do was to turn around and "gallop" back. But, I was completely out of breath what with furnishing at a fast tempo both the music and the instruction.

I recall an old Colosseum occasionally used for entertainment. There we heard the famous opera star, Louise Kellog, who had been brought to our city through the special efforts of two of our local physicians. When she saw where she was to sing, she at first absolutely refused, but was finally persuaded. I shall never forget her entrance on that stage, beautifully gowned; she looked around

and above at those exposed rafters, at the crude structure, then at the audience; she then about doubled up with laughter. The situation was so evident that we too followed her example; friendly relations were established and we went on to a glorious evening of melody and song. She was a great artist.

Later mother and her daughters fell for a *free first night* ticket arrangement to a road show of opera singers, and we were on hand for "Fra Diavola." Next night being "Gerre-Flee-Gerra-Fla," we went into a huddle as to our ability to be present; we decided we could make it. Next evening, Mikado"—same station, same debate—yeas had it. Next evening "La-Pericole" (excuse spelling of proper names, just accept them as they sound) and we again made the grade. Friday night, I cannot remember the name of the show but remember the villain who berated his wife for not having the evening meal prepared, because as she stated there was nothing in the larder but flour and water, and his angry retort—"well . . . then make flap-jacks." Saturday our pocketbooks too were reduced to the state of "flap-jacks," so we remained at home. But with glorious memories of our efforts to go operatic en masse. Thereafter we prudently remained away from any *free first night* entertainments—too costly, for after all a "quarter" was really an aristocrat in the eighties.

Our house was the Cape Cod variety found extensively in all neighborhoods; no dormer windows, but a semi-basement above the ground—two large rooms in front the full width of the lot—two small bed rooms in the rear with an enclosed porch between them. Kitchen and summer kitchen and patio in the rear of that. Our patio though had a roof and three wooden steps the width of the enclosed porch, and those steps, especially in summer provided a meeting place for the family. Many and varied are the memories of the discussions and happenings that went on in that forum—many a private interview with parent and child in need of correction or advice; there, too, the medicine chest complete with all known remedies for childish cuts and bruises was available.

In my day it was the custom to have relatives, usually grandparents, as honored members of the family circle. Ours were too far away, but we did have with us a cheerful old lady of Scotch-Irish descent. She was kind and very witty. She was an excellent substitute for a grandmother, with her crown of snowy hair, and we listened with great delight to her charming tales and stories of yesterday and of the days of her youth when she lived with her father in an old castle in England. She never disappointed us.

In her old rocking chair she would sit with her apron full of apples and teach us to pare them in such a manner that the peeling would remain unbroken, and then to hurl them over our heads in such a manner as to form an initial, indicative of our own particular "spark." I know I tried hard to make mine fall into a certain initial, but it would not, and I lost faith in that trick. While listening we usually had the family *sad* irons between our knees and busily at work wielding the old tack hammer, cracking the shell barks and walnuts.

I have remembered through the years her oft repeated admonition to us, "Never speak of anyone but as you yourselves find them." A fine axiom worth remembering.

Street lighting was of course by gas light on tall standards, and it was great fun to watch for the faithful lamp-lighter on his rightly rounds. The lighting of the homes was provided for by coal-oil lamps of all shapes and suitable for all occasions. But, reserved for the "Parlor" was the hanging lamp with its many prisms. It was a morning chore to fill the lamps, trim the wicks, and see that the homemade paper lamp-lighters were duly twisted and bent at the end, so they would stay securely wrapped, and handy when needed. We did not use many matches, these we saved to stick a pin in and play the old game of jack-straws.

Later I might add appropos of this discussion on illumination, our little town rose to the distinction of being the first town of *its size* in the United States to use Edison's invention, "the incandescent street lighting system."

I paid many a visit to the little brick building in a rear alley near the center of the town to see the sparks fly, and perhaps get a shock.

Mother was a business-like woman, and she had efficient help. Spring and Fall the sewing lady became a member of our family for a few months. The cobbler made the high-buttoned shoes for the girls, and the red-topped copper-tipped boots for the boys. We were fitted out with red flannel petticoats too, and then came the final touch when we were sent to a dear old lady on Franklin street who measured us for our knitted red yarn stockings sure to reach well above the knee. By this stage we knew that winter was just around the corner, and we were prepared for the inevitable itch, a great nuisance.

My parents were bountiful providers; there was meat curing in the basement; ropes of sausage,—garlic and onion,—on long

poles; chickens from the farm, five for a dollar; eggs ten cents a dozen; apples by the barrel,—Russets, Rambos, Jonathans, Grimes Golden,—and yes, even "Welthys" (see how my name persists, even if it has taken on a new gender), and its vowels are just a little confused and erratic.

Discipline was strict, but administered with kindness. We had our regularly appointed tasks, and it fell to my lot, on ironing day, to wield the five, seven, and nine pounders! The skirts to be ironed were always a good six yards in width, with three ruffles to the skirt (including the *dust ruffle,*) plus tucks and insertions. Then there were the ruffled corset covers and other *inner-linings,* and my father's stiff-bosom, pleated shirts. Ironing day was an arduous day, and I did not observe union hours, either. My prejudice against starch and colored clothes has remained to this day. When all the "whites" had been disposed of, there yet remained the "colored" species in the shape of at least one percale "wrapper" per person, and there were four of us. It was a relentless routine and there was no hope of a discharge. Mother insisted I was such a neat worker, she could not get along without me. Pay was poor:—room and board, and *perhaps* five cents on Saturday,—maybe not, though.

I dreamed then of a bright new day when clothes would be all of one color, void of starch. Now we have lived to see the advent of less demanding fashions and of innumerable gadgets which have lightened the arduous domestic tasks of the past.

At night, after a warming up process around the old hard-coal base burner, when it was time for the "Sleepy Town Express," with our frilled night-caps and long sleeved tight cuffed flannel gowns, we would wing our way to the little bedroom beyond the "parlor."

"Parlor" can you vision it? That ancient room reserved for Sundays and Holidays,—when with the fire crackling away in the coal grate with its shadows and pictures, we were allowed to inspect the treasures of bric-a-brac on the whatnot,—the mottoes of "God Bless Our Home" and others on the wall; the marble topped table where rested the family Bible, and tintype and daguerreotype display along with the wax flowers under a glass globe and its companion piece the cross of skeltonized leaves under its dome. There would be a wonderful kaleidoscope, too, with its colorful slides revealing the marvelous views of the great world. It was, in a way, the television set of that day.

Friday nights, especially when the moon was high, and the snow a few feet deep, we usually counted on getting together for a ride in the old bob sled. It was filled with straw and gay companions, and we were off to a friend's home in the country for a taffy pull, and usually for an oysterstew supper too. The return trip was usually hurried along by gay songs, stories and the twinkle of the sleigh-bells.

Saturday, though, with its soap and bucket brigade, was set apart for the scouring of everything that had a surface, including the outside window sills. It was also a day for baking. This was the high point in the day with me, and I was sure to be on hand about 3 *P. M.*, as mother's willing helper. There were all the kuchen, about a dozen or more, ready for their "tops," of sugar, butter and cinnamon. The spreading was done with a lavish hand, and I begged to be allowed that chore. I had a sweet tooth, and oh! what cavities I did make in that dough,—those dear little depressions, when baked became rivers of syrup and delectable confection, which even surpassed the best efforts of our own Mr. Wittich.

No calories were counted, there was no fear of a sugar shortage or a ration card, and I was a generous soul!

Then usually for Saturday, when there was no school, that old bugbear of weeding out the grass and weeds from between the bricks of the side-walk, and the pebbles in the gutter, was a most unpleasant task; how grateful the youth of today should be that that is a chore of the past, and cement pavements and curbs are now the accepted style.

Our parent's bountiful provision of apples, recalls to memory the days when the making of the apple-butter was the "order of the day," usually a two day task. First the paring, halving and coring of the apples, then the boiling down of the cider and sugar addition. This was preliminary for the next day's *stirring* event. We children were drafted for this job. Provided with the well remembered "Apple-butter stir paddle," with its long pole for a handle and its *perforated* attachment of a foot or more, we were usually perched upon a high stool beside the kitchen stove, or out in the yard where a crackling wood fire and the huge brass kettle awaited the great event. The children were assigned the task of *stirring* the contents and we were instructed to stir and stir AND stir to prevent "settling." If we grew weary in well doing an occasional splatter or bursting bubble would recall our wandering fancy to the task at

hand, and we would *bestir* ourselves to keep the "home fires burning."

After the day's work was accomplished the "perforated" end of the paddle was carefully wrapped in paper and placed in its own cradle in the loft until needed for a "repeat performance."

We did not let the seeds go to waste,—no, we used them in the old game of telling our fortune, and there were some disappointments if we stopped short of number *twelve*. We rarely made that grade; we used up a good many apples trying to reach the goal. I think the lyric of the seeds was as follows:

One I love
Two I love
Three I love I say
Four I love with all my heart
Five I cast away.
Six he loves
Seven she loves
Eight they both love.
Nine he comes
Ten he tarries
Eleven he courts
And twelve he marries.

# IV

## *Atmosphere*



AS A CHILD I was conscious of the fact that I must hurry home after school to sew the carpet rags for the new rag-carpet due in the spring or fall. Mother would have the rags all cut into strips about an inch in width and any old length, and the race was on to see who could present the largest ball, which must be tightly wrapped. The amount needed was usually one pound of rags to one yard of carpet, and a fourth pound more if a heavier weight was desired. The rags as to color were many and varied, hit and miss, blues, greens, reds, blacks or any other color, and we did not have to be careful with our stitches,—just a tack or two to hold them together until the weaver took charge to remedy any leaks.

This sewing together of rags was an art known to all our ancestors, a far cry from the art of the oriental rug weavers, yet still not a primitive gesture. Ask your mother, you doubting Thomas, she may be able to tell of the gradual improvement from the rag-carpet to the ingrain, then to tapestry Brussels and on to the body Brussels. By the time we reached this last level we were the last word in society and eligible to join the local "Four Hundred."

Recently a gentleman friend of mine recalled his own school days; there was no time out for marbles or for baseball squad! Grandma was awaiting him at home, and he was expected to produce at least one ball of rags each day after school. He grew lyric over his experience, which lasted as long as the rags did. When asked if I used a tailor's thimble,—I replied no, that I used an "over-all" for the needle never would operate for me on a *side* issue. I hope Henry Ford has relics in his museum that will serve to remind our young Americans that their forebears not only sewed carpet-rags, but crocheted their own lace and tidies, molded their own candles, provided their own movies with charades and their own home talent plays, conducted their own forums at the town hall or on a cracker barrel at the corner grocery,—a forerunner of the "American Town Meeting of the Air."

One would do well also to remember their meetings together on week days around their family altars, and on Sundays at their meeting houses to thank their God for His blessings, protection and guidance through happy and stormy times.

The carpet-rag days were accompanied by another antique maneuver, the yearly filling of the straw-tick with fresh straw or corn husks from the farm, the *inner-mattress* of the times. This meant a field day for us children. The same "matting" had to be placed under the new carpet, to even up the ridges in our own particular brand of "*hard wood*" floors. Over this mat the carpet was to be stretched to the 'nth-degree by the old hand manipulated carpet-stretcher with its claw teeth so apt to slip, and we youngsters were in for a *bouncing* time.

Then came the quilting bees and the knotting of the latest comforter. The frame was set up in the sitting room, and provision was made for the gathering of the clan to quilt the latest "Nine Patch," "Log Cabin," or other late pattern.

Dinner was, of course, a *major* item in the day's program. Conversation was brisk, remarks were passed pro and con, and when the day's work had been accomplished, all news of the day had been covered more thoroughly and with more animation than any "Magazine Section."

I liked to spend my weekends with my uncle and aunt on their farm, where I learned to milk after a bout with Buttercup, who resented my milking her from the wrong side and upset my bucket. She also resented the tying up of her tail because it was so discon-

certing to the milkmaid. That tail, it struck at such surprising angles! Then I had to contend with a three legged stool which was so apt to upset. One eye I kept on it and the other on an officious back right leg which loved to get in a side kick. But, it was a great experience for the uninitiated.

I offered to help my uncle plow his field for corn one day, but hadn't finished more than one row when I got my walking papers,—my row was too crooked. It was rather uneven, what with the depressions, ridges, lumps, clods and stones; and I had acquired not a few "stun" bruises enroute, and was ready to quit anyway.

I offered to help him gather a part of his potato crop, but that didn't work either. I had the wrong kind of muscles, they would not stand the *strain*. City-bred he said.

I tried horseback riding on old "Frank," that was pastured on my uncle's farm, and lived long enough to call it another day, but I unearthed a side-saddle and with perseverance had better results. That horse was a very intelligent critter.

My uncle, aunt and family always joined us for circus day, and very early in the morning we were on hand for a visit to the grounds where the circus equipment and animals were unloaded. We watched them put up the tents and take the elephants down to the creek to drink; then rushed home for a bite to eat and off again to our own special reserved seats along the curb in front of our home, all set for the parade. How eagerly we awaited that glorious spectacle with its jungle fraternity,—its chain gang of elephants holding on to one another with their long trunks,—the monkeys, clowns and bands, and then bringing up the rear that old favorite, the steam calliope. After the parade we breathlessly snatched our dinner and hurried on to take in the side-show and its freaks. Then on to the menagerie tent and the main show where we received the thrill of our young lives, and which made conversation easy for many weeks thereafter, as we recounted the many thrilling acts and sights we had seen.

Our parents indulged us on this day of days to the limit; balloons and other treats,—all the refreshments so much a part of the day,—pink lemonade, peanuts, ice-cream, candy and popcorn.

The circus of that day was a one-ringer; no reserved seats;—first come, first served. It is too bad the three-ringer of today has supplanted it, for you just cannot possibly see everything with only one pair of eyes. But, sadly enough, the streamline circus minus its

colorful parade has reached us. Even so, we find ourselves trying for an excuse to visit the circus by maintaining the old fiction that the *children* just must see the elephants, etc. Are you guilty?

I belonged to the southend baseball nine, organized down at our corner grocery. I was a fleet runner and was tolerated especially as an out-fielder,—to pick up the stray balls. I never could learn to "throw" a ball, and had to pitch it girl fashion, so I was not accepted as a member of the city's finest team, the "Buckeyes," in their rise to fame. No matter how expert I was, I was but a "girl," but I was sure to be on hand on the bleachers rooting for the corner squad members, several of whom went on to considerable fame outside our own city.

# V

## *The Victorian Age*

IT IS VERY refreshing to turn back the pages of life, and it is fairly easy in this modern age of speed, restlessness, and the new look, to comment adversely on the manners and customs of an earlier day: the ladies with their little horseshoe bonnets, or those of shirred silk Quaker styled, tied so demurely under their chin; their Paisley shawls and high buttoned shoes. But they were patterns of modesty. The bonnet finally succumbed to the floppy rimmed hat in keeping with the dragging skirts and muff. They nearly always wore eye-glasses on a long black ribbon, something like lorgnettes, I believe, though they were seldom *folded up*.

I would love to have our dear old aunties and grandmothers return and view the streamlined parade of the present! In their youth even the fifteen-year old wore their floor-length dresses, plus *trains!*



The skirts of their day were also billowing ballerinas, about six yards wide lined with buckram, including the sleeves, especially the "Leg of Mutton."

Come to think of it, however, the "new look" of 1948 might not startle them so much. "Three generations from petticoat ruffle to petticoat ruffle," and still the old longing of the lady with the forty-four inch waist to wear the style suitable only for a sixteen inch waist.

Our bathing beauties were not clothed in an alarming state of undress, but were well covered.



I am sure in any contest for correctly attired bathing beauties either at Atlantic City or elsewhere, the judges would be shocked, and my two candidates for fame would be reduced to accepting the "Booby" prize.

Then if their attention should be directed to the bubble gum of today, they would be reminded of that old reliable shoemaker's wax, used by the juveniles of their day, and now relegated to the limbo along with the old mustache cup,—Button, Button, who's got the Button; the making of tidies and lamp wicks with four pins stuck in the top of a spool, or the hair-pin lace of blessed memory; the making of the fly chaser with long strips of paper tacked to a stick to brush the flies away, especially when we had company for dinner. Too bad we did not have the comic magazines, to have added *color* to the contraption,—we could have had a "sit down strike" and amused ourselves with cutting up "Little Orphan Annie" and making some superb crossword puzzles, you know we had to be resourceful; the scissors grinder with his equipment on his back

and the ringing of the familiar cow bell so merrily to summon patrons to his skill; the umbrella mender with his tools.

Then, the Italian organ-grinder with the little monkey on a long rope, dancing for the entertainment of the crowd, and acting as his master's cash register with his little cap, soliciting contributions. He was sure to have an audience.

Our mode of travel was varied and interesting. Rather staggering were the first bicycles with their giant front wheel about five feet high, and little dwarf running mate about a foot high bringing up the rear. But, when mounted by a determined rider, dressed for the part with his frock coat, derby hat, wing collar and barber's mustache, it covered the ground effectually.

The canal boat, paddle boat and stage coach supplements the horse and buggy period, and especially attractive was the old family surrey with its fringed top and *adjustable* seats.

We had on our own river a small "cheese box" of a pleasure boat called the "Anna Bell," for short excursions to an island a few miles away. We went on a picnic once (a community affair) on that craft and landed on a sand-bar where we remained the rest of the day until rescued late in the evening. We had the band and most of the "eats" with our party and survived, but I do not remember any other jaunts on that particular boat.

At that time radios were unheard of, no electric irons or tractors, nor filling stations, no heavier-than-air-craft, no prohibition; women could not vote, there were no lady lawyers or lady physicians.

When the movie industry did arrive, it was afflicted with the "jitters" as the subject was thrown on the screen, and our automobiles were at first something like horseless carriages, and the well remembered pneumatic tires that were warranted to be punctured every few miles.

# VI

## *Trying—and Earning—My Wings*

I DO not know what it was that continually impelled me, even as a young girl, to strike out, now here now there, and always in a new direction, to seek a craft or profession which my particular assortment of abilities would best serve. But whatever else may be said of my endeavors, I am sure *this* much can be said without the slightest qualification: I tried everything I could, and I enjoyed each enterprise and adventure to the full!

My first fledgling instincts to go forth upon an adventure for myself exerted themselves suddenly one Sunday morning when I was placidly (or as placidly as I do anything) perched on our front steps watching people go by on their way to church. Fate presently led into my line of vision the fashionable figures of our local dressmakers, who were without question the leaders of their craft in Circleville. I made a blitz decision on the spot to be a dress designer, and before the neatly molded ladies had gone more than half a block I had charged after them and bluntly asked whether they might need an apprentice.

Everybody was surprised, I, they, and especially my mother. Nay, my mother was shocked at this drastic sprouting of independence. The kindly seamstresses, however, accepted me—I know not with what mental reservations—and advised me to come to their home the next morning. After a day or so of instructions and trial and the most assiduous effort on my part, I was considered a worthy candidate to storm the iron gates of the guild, and I entered into a contract for work at $2.50 a week. I was quite young. At this point in my life the painstaking and exacting details of putting women's garments together suited me exactly, for I was a very precise little miss. Every seam, every tuck, every mitred corner had to be just so. But my devotion to the craft and to the chores of "learning the business from the ground up" almost led to my downfall. One of the sisters, while commending me highly for my neatness, gently reminded me that their prices did not justify making a museum piece out of the *inside* of a garment, and that I would

have to speed up a bit. So I did, but it always pained me to leave any flying ends.

My particular job at one point was to shir chiffon vests, then very much in vogue. I remember spending a considerable number of very uneasy hours on one vest intended for a bride. I had pricked my finger while working on the sheer material and had left a small blood stain. It took me hours of maneuvering and shifting the material about so as to cover that spot, and I didn't sleep o' nights until after the bride was safely off on her honeymoon, for I was afraid she would leave her groom if she discovered the spot. It was considered extremely unlucky for the bride if any of her wedding garments were other than absolutely spotless.

The endless assortment of pads, bustles, and hoops fascinated me. I tried all possible arrangements on myself and had a superb time trying to be a one-woman animated photograph album! Eventually I mastered the art of sitting down gracefully in a hoopskirt or bustle and remaining fully clothed. If you think this is easy, just try it!



Then, when occasion required and I sallied forth with my hair in a psyche knot, my floppy broad rimmed hat, lace mits and ruffled adjustable sun-shade, I felt the styles were fully established, and I can vision yet how adept one could become in "holding up a train," in the gay nineties or thereabouts.

My brief whirl in the world of "fashions" came to an undramatic end long before I had reached my goal as a designer, but I learned the rudiments of a now little practiced art.

My mother furnished the spark that set me off on my next tack. She purchased a *beaver* cape for my sister, and I was very envious. Although it was the established rule in the family that the next child down the ladder usually inherited the discards of her predecessor, I saw no hope of inheriting that cape within a reasonable time, and my impatience knew no bounds. So I looked about for a remunerative field of action and found a publishing house that was seeking an agent to sell Christmas books in Circleville. I charged around freely with my prospectus, and I suppose heartlessly pursued all my friends, but I *did* make the magnificent sum of fifty dollars in small change in an incredibly short time, *and* I purchased an *otter* cape! Mother apparently thought that this burst of industry deserved encouragement and promptly presented me with an otter muff. Then my snub nose did go out of joint for sure, and I was all primed to set the world on fire with sheer energy.

My ambition, mounting upon my experience with the Christmas books, was especially fired when a lady appeared who wanted someone who could place agents in nearby towns to sell a profound volume entitled *Art and Artists of our Time*. The proposition sounded fine to me and I was accepted for the position. I was sent first to Lancaster, Ohio, where I found room and board for three weeks at a house on the corner of Mulberry and Broad Streets, directly across the street from St. Peter's church and parsonage, where in later years my husband and I were to come so often to visit my sister and her clergyman husband. I wrote glowing letters home about my experiences, so glowing in fact, that my mother passed them around for our neighbors to read. I suppose mother felt she ought to convince some doubting Thomases that her young hopeful was doing quite well, thank you. I never had a door shut in my face during my whole career as a saleswoman. One lady (generous of me to call her a lady, come to think of it!) tried it once, but I slipped my foot inside the door as though to enter, and she changed her mind and bought a book.

My next stop was Gallipolis, where I stayed for about a month and where I had my first taste of Southern cooking in combination with a queer experience. It had got to be my habit, upon entering a new scene of activity, to pay my board and room in advance, so

that if my sales prowess should fail me I should at least have time for a breather before running for home base. The first week in Gallipolis demonstrated the wisdom of this thought, and I was about to pay the second week in advance when one of the daughters of my landlady took me aside and begged me to wait with my money until the end of the week. Unheard of! But you see, her dear mother had one outstanding weakness; she loved her pipe. Any cash that might be about loose—such as board and room money paid in advance—would quickly go for tobacco, and then there would not be enough to meet the grocery bill. So I accommodated. But this otherwise spotless character made ample amends in the culinary department. She was a superb cook in the Southern fashion, and I loved her hot biscuits with every meal.

Pomeroy was my next victim. The town boasted one single street which wove its way for about seven miles along the Ohio River, and as far back as you could see were the everlasting hills. There I saw my first miners and learned to know the mining community with its tiny shacks pinned like cardboard houses to the hillsides. Needless to say, my market for art books here was a bit restricted, so I soon sallied forth to Huntington, West Virginia. Here too, my stay was short. The chief figure in an old romance showed up in Huntington with a ring still in his pocket. He asked me if I had changed my mind, and I firmly gave the current equivalent of "Nope" as an answer and hotfooted it for the home fireside.

My welcome was somewhat of a surprise. The family had acquired a new four-piece suite for the parlor! Why? Because I had written such enthusiastic and convincing letters home about my booming business, that they thought I might want an improvement in my immediate surroundings to match my mounting prosperity.

After a short time in Jackson and Hamilton, I ended my career as a seller of books, but I can look back upon it as colorful and rich in experience. If I had it to do over, though, I think I would start in Missouri where questiones are rarely asked and *never* answered.

I took a shot at music too. This particular episode was initiated when a young friend of mine was leaving Circleville to become a member of the family of one of the professors at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. She invited me to go along as her guest for a week end, and I accepted with alacrity, for I had long had hopes of becoming either a lyric or a coloratura soprano, and I thought that by going to Cincinnati I would be at least tempting

fate. In the course of my visit, I was granted an audition and subsequently a *half* scholarship. I was only a mezzo, they found, and mezzos don't rate so high! I faded quickly out of this enticing picture with my hopes of stardom blasted. My friends tried hard to console me, saying that although my voice was sweet, it was rather thin for an opera singer. So I settled back to wait a while, thinking that I might improve with age. Eventually, along with many another thwarted songbird, I came to rest in the church choir where I was content to go on reaching for high "C" while my sister held forth in the contralto section. I suppose that what was really in my mind at this time was that the children of a man who could play the mouth harp, the accordion, piano, and B cornet, all equally well, should enjoy extraordinary musical gifts, and I was anxious to captilize on mine.

It was on this jaunt that as a very young girl I accompanied my friend on her trip from Cincinnati to Ironton by way of the Ohio River on the old faithful "Island Queen."

What an adventure, with the band playing and the very air full of gayety and happiness, we wended our slow way from shore to shore unloading the cargo at each landing; the stevedores bending their backs to the heavy loads, but whistling as they worked; no modern tools or machinery to help them.

The scenery was inspiring and enchanting. The menu was Southern, of course, hot biscuits and ice-cream at every meal and met with my hearty approval for those two were and have remained my specialties.

I tucked away at that time a hope that I might some day go all the way with "Old Man Ribber," but it did not become a reality until much later. I only caught up with him when the Mississippi was the first thing I sought on a land trip to New Orleans, that Creole city of dreams, and found him "rollin' along." That great river and great city, with its atmosphere of the past and yet its modern touch. Not so much in a hurry perhaps as its northern neighbors, perhaps harboring a more contented people. I loved its French quarter and its history and was particularly happy when a dear old "Sister" personally conducted me through one of its strictly cloistered convents, and I heard the sisters in their chapel raising glorious voices in the Ave Maria, in praise and adoration of their Lord.

It was soon apparent at home that some kind of a master plan

for me had to be worked out, and it was finally decided that I was to go to a business college in Dayton, where a cousin of my father had graduated and subsequently carried on a successful career. Without much ado my belongings were soon deposited in the family *telescope* (even if I were not free in admitting my age, this word would be a dead give-away!), and with this single antique and humiliating object I took off for Dayton, Ohio.

I remember making one very firm resolution on that trip; I would not travel *back* to Circleville with that telescope. I would have a trunk if I had to eat only one meal a day all term. Actually I didn't do it just that way—I ate one meal a day divided into three parts! But, I finally did get a trunk for the magnificent sum of nine dollars, and I even had my initials painted on it as big as a signboard. My sparse wardrobe rattled around in it in a most revealing way, but anything was better than the telescope. My room was all of $1.25 a week, and my breakfast for a short time was 15 cents. It wasn't long, however, before the landlady raised her price on the breakfast, for I loved pancakes, and she had a hard time making good cakes and a profit too. Lunch was restricted to one of two combinations, either a sandwich and coffee, or coffee and mince pie. The weather usually decided this crucial matter for me; snow always indicated mince pie, and to this day I cannot see a snowflake without tasting spiced raisins! Supper was a mere gesture, tea and whatever else was lying around. I admit feeling the grim contrast to my mother's bountiful table very much at first, but visions of the fine trunk compensated for hunger pangs.

This obsession for pancakes and a trunk did not seem to be too distracting, however, for I made rapid progress in shorthand and typewriting and was shunted along from class to class by my teachers. At the end of the fifth month, along came a letter from my father bearing the startling news that I had already been offered a position. A brother Knight Templar, whom he called "Dick," was about to appoint an official court reporter for Pickaway County, and "Will's" daughter could have the job. When I told my professor, he rocked back on his heels with shock, and then caustically inquired, "Young lady, where did you ever get the brilliant idea that one started in this business at the top? You will disgrace the College!" This warning cooled off my ambition somewhat, but a second letter from my father was insistent, so I went home. The salary sounded wonderful: seven dollars a day, and so much per hundred words for transcribing into long hand! The catch was, however, that a court stenographer wasn't used every

day, so I soon learned that I had to save my gasping for other elements in the position than the salary, and gasp I did for many moons.

On the eve of my twenty-third birthday, I was to be summoned for a test of my ability before the Judge known as "Dick." Everything would probably have gone off quite smoothly had not my father decided to put me through my paces just before I left the house. There was something about my father that acted as a kind of paralytic agent in my nervous system every time I had to perform in his presence. Perhaps it was the memory of those silly report cards I had had to dig out of my pinafore pocket for him that acted in my subconscience. I remember with painful clarity an occasion when I had been asked to sing at a meeting of the local Farmer's Institute at the Opera House. The event was carefully kept a secret from my father, and everything was all set to bowl over my audience with my much-rehearsed high "C." I got along beautifully, too, and was just about ready to bow myself off the stage when I spied my father peeking out from behind a pillar supporting the gallery. Promptly the report card psychosis began to function and my last lingering grace notes floated up toward the rafters, and for all I know they are still there. It seems that father had met a friend on the street who had given away our secret, and he had popped in just in time for my number and considerately but unsuccessfully had tried to keep out of sight.

Well, anyway, father's test of my shorthand ability was a flop and at the moment he was convinced that our investment of time, money, and toil had been wasted. But no matter what he felt I was hardly put in the mood for a superlative performance afterward! My sister accompanied me to the Judge's home for moral support, but once inside his library I had sense enough to suggest to my sister and the Judge's wife that I could not do myself justice with so much of an audience, so they left.

Much to my surprise and delight the Judge chose not to deliver a treatise on the law. Instead he made up some kind of a simple story involving a horse, a buggy, a man, and other details of transportation in those days. I didn't even really need to use word signs, all I had to do was to fall back on my trusty memory—so much maligned by the recital about the *"Monitor"* and the *"Merrimac."* My notes were a scramble, but I could repeat the Judge's words back to him to his satisfaction; he presently tore a little slip from a yellow tablet (which I still have), and wrote on it my ap-

pointment as court reporter for a three-year term. This episode sealed my fate for the next *seven* years.

Almost every type of litigation was brought before the Court during that period, including several murder trials. The most famous case during my employment was one in which Colonel Coit was charged with exceeding his authority as an officer of the Guard which had been called to quell a disturbance or near riot at Washington Court House, Ohio. Since feeling ran high the Governor had had the case brought to Pickaway County by change of venue. There was distinguished counsel on both sides, one of whom, George Nash, was later to become Governor of Ohio. Another was Harry Daugherty, afterwards Attorney General of the United States. Manus O'Donnel, the Court Reporter of Franklin County, had been appointed to cover the afternoon session while I handled the morning session. Since the notes had to be transcribed and on counsel's table by the next session no one person could handle the trial. I found out later that O'Donnel had made a private arrangement with Colonel Coit to pay him the whole per diem fee privately, since no "mere woman" could hold out for such a long trial and he could report it alone. I foiled this scheme, however, and at the end of the trial he offered me the first assistantship to himself as official court reporter of Franklin County, but I declined. At long last, my business college and my doubting-Thomas teacher took cognizance of my existence, claimed the credit for my achievements, and even hung my picture on their wall. They qualified all statements about me, however, somewhat as follows: "This kind of thing *can* be done, if you study with us. But it is neither guaranteed nor recommended."

When court was not in session, and at all odd moments, I tried to collect as much practical experience as possible. I entered Judge Dresbach's office for a few months for practice, and there I acquired an invaluable knowledge of legal phrases, and indeed I absorbed some law as well. He was a fine lawyer and very particular with his legal papers and their preparation, their grammar, and their punctuation. At the end of that experience I had learned to abbreviate on about the same level as Pittman, the founder of the system I used, and it was fun in the bargain.

Shortly after my appointment, I was employed during the month of August to help out in the office of a Circleville canning factory, owned by Mrs. Sears, and one of the largest of its kind anywhere. The regular office force at that time consisted of a

bookkeeper and Mrs. Sears' two nephews as managers. At the height of the harvest and canning season, I was taken on and assigned the special task of figuring out from the books how many twenty, ten, five, and one dollar bills, and how many silver and other coins of all denominations would be needed to meet the Saturday payroll. The payroll was very large, and pay day was a major event not only for the employers and staff but also for all of Circleville, for the bills and silver that went out over our little counter quickly found their way into the tills of local merchants.

Come the great day, our "office force," staggering under the weight of considerable small change, would proceed to a little shed about 10 by 12 feet, with two windows and a door. We proceeded to lay out our paper money in neat stacks, but for our coins, in the absence of the modern cash register, we used three pie tins. Dimes and nickels were in one, quarters and halves and silver dollars in another, and pennies in the third. Life was simple in those days! Next we would lay out our arsenal: two revolvers and a hat pin. The shooting arms gave me assurance but it was the hat pin in which I really invested my confidence. The rush was on the minute we opened the window; a name and an amount were called and a sum delivered to a waiting hand. No questions were asked, no stamps were used, no cards presented. We were the last word in efficiency, and we were certainly pioneers in the field of financing. We were always on time; nothing was held back; there were no deductions from the pay check to run the government; there were no complaints.

I often think back upon the simplicity of our methods and equipment in contrast with those of the present day. I draw no hurried conclusions, but I suppose I could fire a few well-aimed shots at the old scapegoat—red tape!

All this time, of course, I was subject to call from the Court, and although I was pretty sure that Court would not convene until October, I jumped every time the telephone rang. Sure enough, one morning I received the fatal message: I was to appear in Court at one o'clock to take down the Judge's decision in a certain case. Now this was enough to strike terror to the heart of an experienced reporter, let alone that of a greenhorn! It usually means taking down a long and uninterrupted string of words taken directly from the law dictionaries. One can count on no small words to give the reporter a breather or a chance to catch up. I was terrified and made a tremendous effort (oh shades of my shocked teacher!) but

I was sure I had met my Waterloo. The lawyer interested in the case, then the Judge's partner in law, asked me to furnish him a copy as soon as I had transcribed my notes, and I remember giving him a long and mournful look. "I wish," said I, "that I too could have a copy—preferably the Judge's own private copy!" He too, gave me one look, but, bless him, he understood how devastating the experience had been for me, and broke forth in sympathetic laughter. I don't know why I wasn't fired, but generosity in these matters was part of the simplicity of those days.

Without delay, I hied myself to the Clerk's office to see what the next case was going to be about! It concerned a money dispute, involving a horse and pasture, etc., so I practiced on words like green grass, fence, border lines, and feed, to add to my shorthand vocabulary and managed to squeak through this time. The case was not appealed, anyway, so whatever errors I made will remain unknown to me and everyone else, I trust.

I have often wondered what would have happened if the lawyer interested in that first case I handled had not possessed a sense of humor. He remembered the episode and twitted me about it at the reception after Judge and I were married. He gave me some good advice, too, about maintaining a successful marriage. "Never both get angry at the same time," said he. "But," he continued, "if you two do get into marital difficulties, I warn you now that I shall take the part of your husband, for I've never known him to get ruffled in his life, no matter what the provocation!"

My chicken tracks, as I called them, proved to be very useful to me always, and I have taught a goodly number of pupils the art. I suppose it was especially much fun in those early days because it was an innovation in public and private procedures. The jurors used to come to my desk at recess and ask me to "write something down" for them in their little memorandum books so they could show their families some tangible evidence of how things were done in "a big city."

After the debacle at Cincinnati I made one further positive effort to wring a musical career from a reluctant fate. I tried to swap my newly acquired skill in shorthand for voice lessons with the music teacher in our local public schools. At our first session I was to have an audition to "place" my voice, and this attempt wrecked the plan. I was subjected to the painful experience of trying to pull some tones from somewhere else than what I knew to be my throat! The teacher said something about full, rounded

tones from a lower register—something finer, not so throaty, but how these tones were to rise from the lower register and burst upon a waiting world without going through the throat remained a mystery to me. So that was that. But I evened the score by testing her for aptitude on the typewriter and for shorthand, and at least had the pleasure of telling her that she had best stick to her pursuit of the elusive tones from the lower register, that scorned to use the throat! For she would have starved at what was to become my stock in trade. I told her she wasn't quick enough for my trade, and I was too quick for hers, that she could beat time with her baton all right, but she could not pound a typewriter or learn the wig-way system either.

# VII

## The Hallowe'en Party

ANOTHER event that rises out of the golden haze of yesterday was a never-to-be-forgotten Hallowe'en party six of "us girls" decided to arrange. Much of the fun was in planning of the affair, of course, and we accomplished this with considerable abandon. I was made responsible for the menu and the "program," and I set to work with a will. Hand-drawn (by me) invitations in the shape of an oak leaf with veins traced on them in gold ink were issued to six of our favorite young gentlemen, and the following words were inscribed on the reverse side:

The good old dame of Hallowe'en
Has all her forces ready
To spread before both boy and girl
The fruits of mystery and plenty;
And with her wand of magic
Will tell you something tragic,
If when the witches are about
You will to 145 Pinkney Street
Come out.

7:45 P. M.

There was much secrecy about the "program." Not even my fellow conspirators knew exactly what to expect or what was coming. But there wasn't a faint heart in the whole bunch and everybody turned out for the party in high spirits. The guests arrived



promptly and were ushered into a darkened house by our hostess' mother, dressed appropriately, and armed with the proverbial witches' broom stick. Only a weird pumpkin face and a lone candle at the turn of the stairs yielded a dim light. The boys were held in one room upstairs until all six of them had arrived. Not a titter or a feminine squeal relieved the dark silence. There was much whispered speculation among our guests about the strange arrangements of cords strung from ceilings, window panes, piano legs, and chairs. Somehow or other each cord managed to attach itself to the legs of the chairs occupied by our guests and also to those of their masked partners, who were sitting silently beside them swathed in sheets and pillow cases. Of course, the men were afraid to sit down on the empty chair, but the awe-struck males were then presented with printed instructions as to how to follow up their particular string and were reassured that they would then wind up beside their particular flame at the festive board. After many entanglements, much scrambling around on all fours, and final unmasking we arrived at the dining room for an inspired Hallowe'en banquet. I can mention only a few of the frills, but there were the traditional pumpkin pies, spiced apples, and raw oysters glistening from a hollowed out cake of ice in the center of the table. Wieners and peanuts were hung in festoons from the chandelier to the table corners; pop corn balls, swung at varying lengths from the long suffering chandelier, also enlivened the scene.

Before each guest's plate was the special peanut which had been found at the end of his particular ball of string, and which served as a place card. But each peanut harbored a verse that had to be read. Our hostess' friend opened his peanut first. I had met my hostess a few hours earlier, and, in answer to her inquiry about what her verse would be, I had told her that I had simply written a quip alluding to her well-known ability in reciting poetry, especially James Whitcomb Riley's *Little Orphan Annie.*

As she doth declaim with power
She is apt to use some powder.

Reassured as to the essential harmlessness (if not poetic virtue) of these lines, she went her way peacefully. But, what her best beau actually read was:

Though with power she doth declaim,
She's so much rather change her name!

There was an explosion, of course, for she had been so sure of me! Well, you can imagine the restlessness of the other members of the party. And when another dear friend of mine listened for her verse to come rolling out of that peanut, I got a glare instead of a smile; her swain was notoriously shy, and she received a jolt when I attempted to speed up the course of true love by the following:

Though of yards and inches she is master
You need not hesitate to ask her.

She received a thimble that evening but it was shortly thereafter replaced by a wedding ring. Her sister, enamored of the county treasurer, was next:

Though a very Shylock with his treasure,
He is fickle beyond measure!

This maligned gentleman drew a ring in his slice of cake, and undoubtedly anxious to prove his felicity he married his particular lady hard upon the party. And so the merriment went on until each blushing nonplussed young couple had been properly versified. I got off the easiest, of course! After all, there have to be some rewards for the poet laureate of the party! At one stage of the party we were to run around the block with our hands full of salt and our mouths full of water, the superstition being that one would marry the first eligible person one met in this queer state! But I made it only as far as the front door before a pair of quick hands clapped down on both my cheeks and a handsome shirt bosom wilted on the spot. I did my turn around the block though, and I did meet a widower. But I was never one to be superstitious and I let that "hope" die a spontaneous and immediate death.

Yes, those were glorious and fun-filled days. As I look back along the long corridor of my memory to that particular autumn, and indeed to a procession of succeeding ones, there comes to my mind a few thoughts I once expressed in a more earnest mood, under the spell of the beloved season.

## *THE FALL OF THE LEAF*

'Tis eventide and on the roof
The gentle patter of the rain is heard:
The flutter of the leaf to earth
The changing colors—proclaiming
The many facets of the soul.
From whence they come we do not know
But in our hearts their message sings
Like tears of joy the Resurrection song.
From God above whose wondrous truths
The season's glories declare
The majesty of Creation's Lord
For all who love and follow through.

# VIII

## *Domesticity—of a Kind!*

MY MARRIAGE to Judge I. N. Abernethy was one of those rare events that can unqualifiedly be called a "good thing"! There were no "ifs and ands;" we were very happy. My husband was called "Dick" by almost all of Circleville, and by a wide circle of friends and professional acquaintances everywhere. His memory as a distinguished lawyer and jurist will be valued by many, but to those of us who knew him intimately and saw him every day, his bearing and manner as a gentleman of the old school, his delightful wit, his warm understanding and generous approach to the problems of humanity that fell his way endeared him to us and left an indelible mark upon our lives. He was a real philanthropist, quick to judge and abide by the finer, richer elements in human nature. No one in need who ever came to him for help was turned away until all avenues of assistance had been explored, fee or no fee. His character was one of extreme simplicity and kindliness, with a gift of sympathy and help for others. He retained the love of all who came in contact with him.

In describing his earlier beginnings as a young lawyer, he said that he and his earlier partner shared a one-room office, and that they had managed to put in a partition to give at least an appearance of privacy. Since the partition did not go all the way up to the ceiling, however, one of the partners always had to retire into the hall when his colleague had a client. He didn't even mention the possibility that *both* of them might have clients at the same time! In those horse and buggy days many clients came in for the day, meals included.

My husband later became the partner of the well-known Henry F. Page, who had established an office opposite "Dick's." I asked him once how they happened to become partners, and he said simply that Mr. Page had probably observed his efforts to maintain a growing family, and one day invited him to come on across the hall and conduct his business there as a partner. "So," said Dick, "I just picked up my lead pencil and I was all moved." During the period my husband was presiding as Judge in the Court of Common

Pleas, Franklin County, Ohio, he became associated as lecturer with the newly established Law Department at Ohio State University, and his partner, Mr. Page, gave Page Hall to the University.

This firm was one of the first subscribers to the local Telephone Company when it was established in our little city, and was directly over their law office; they also had the first typewriter, a caligraph, and were pioneers in anything that would promote the welfare of their city.

Mr. Page's lovely home in Circleville is a long established landmark, but quite the most beautiful objects in it are two heavy crystal chandeliers hung with great ropes of prisms which he brought home with him on his return from Paris. I loved those chandeliers, and twice, after Mr. Page's death, when we occupied the Page home during some interval between our own building operations, I had a chance to live with them. My attachment to the chandeliers was such that it got to be the subject of a standing joke among my friends. They always accused me of building new houses so that in the interim period I could go back to live with the Page chandeliers. The American Legion Society is now housed in that old home, so the general public may be permitted a glimpse of these sparkling beauties.

In my husband's youth he was a student under a dearly loved old Aunt who knew his ambition to be a teacher. She coached him in the old McGuffy series of readers and spellers, which were the standard text books, in which were set forth all the arts and virtues necessary to a rounded cultural life. He could recite reams of verse and quotations from memory in later years, and the old series was highly prized by him. He had a full set in his library and often referred to them and their great value in the education of the youthful student. Later in life he was very active in establishing a McGuffy Club in our city. He called together old friends and teachers for an evening's entertainment; his own subject being "Mary Had a Little Lamb," which was a great success as they responded as teacher and student. He had a certificate to teach at the early age of fifteen years, and afterwards went on to being a superintendent of schools, newspaper owner and editor, and the law.

Sentiment, of course, plays its part in referring to past experiences, but we have much to learn by capturing some of the charm of the cultural heritage of an earlier day.

Though a very distinguished lawyer and judge, he was rather

hazy as to domestic activities. When he would offer to give me a lift by drying the dishes, replacements became a regular item in our budget.

Once, when I was ill, he offered to let the nurse off for the week-end, and try his hand at cooking. In the course of the preparation of the Sunday dinner, he came into my room wreathed in smiles and stated, "Well, I have the steak covered with water,—what next?"

His duties of a Saturday night included the winding of the "Grandfather" clock. He did not stand on one foot as is the German custom in winding it, he was too much of a Scotchman for that, but he did stand on one foot once when a mouse ran out of the clock and ran up his trouser leg. He made a grab for the mouse and a broom, and I made for the sofa for protection, and a scream.

The verbal details that followed we had to bury from polite society, but it was certainly an exciting few minutes until he resumed his normal position with both feet on the floor.

After the Judge and I were married, I went along to work in the office as a temporary arrangement until our new home was completed. But I stayed on for thirty-two years, or until his death, as a happy contented partner in his professional activities. No matter what the reverses or successes, our hearts and minds were perfectly attuned, and we experienced no difficulties in mixing business and marriage. It was a thoroughly happy and congenial arrangement all the way around.

The Judge's love of animals was proverbial in Circleville, and there is a great stock of stories about him and the dogs, horses, and other domestic species adopted at one time or another. To him all dogs were "Tony" and all horses "Nellie," irrespective of the accident of sex. But he did have one bird dog who won special distinction in being called "Brownie." Brownie was a familiar figure to Circlevillians. He regularly went to court with the Judge, and there was never an attendant there who would refuse to open the door to him. Once inside he would settle himself at his master's feet, ears straight up, all senses on the alert. I remember one time in particular; the sheriff had been sent to the jail to bring over a prisoner to be sentenced. Meanwhile the Judge had retired to his private quarters. Brownie kept watch, however, and when the poor man was brought in, Brownie walked over to the rostrum with

consummate dignity, placed his two front paws on the bench, cocked his head to one side and quietly fastened his steady gaze upon the prisoner. If he had begun to speak at that point, I think actually no one in the court room would have been surprised. But the incident was never forgotten by those who witnessed it, and I believe the dog even gave the prisoner a feeling that he was in a place where justice and good will prevailed.

Brownie received his name in a unique way. He followed my husband to a lodge meeting one evening, and was taken on in by the genial brothers. There were great doings that night, and the daily paper afterwards reported that the Judge's dog had been "taken to the Orient in an airship" at the Brownie Lodge meeting, and had walked home a full fledged Brownie. But I, of course, was not let in on the details. From then on Brownie always had a knowing look in his eye!

Brownie was deathly afraid of firecrackers, so on one Fourth of July we tried our best to prevent him from following us to the office downtown where there was sure to be merry-making. But he hurdled all barriers and we soon spotted him across the street, stalking us like an Indian. When we stopped, he stopped; when we moved, he moved. But at the corner of Main Street a huge firecracker went off and Brownie streaked for home. The next day we buried him in the garden. He had been literally scared to death.

"Tony-the-Collie," as I shall have to call him to distinguish him from many miscellaneous Tonies, was one of the most beautiful dogs I have ever seen. The Judge loved him dearly, and his place in the household was as firmly established as our own. As a matter of fact, he was so beautiful that we thought he must get the first prize at the Columbus Kennel show. But maybe he was too human for that! He received second prize.

It was a tragedy of the first order when one day, while we were picnicking on Scippo Creek to amuse our four visiting nieces and nephews, the children took it into their heads to force Tony into the water. He had a dreadful fear of water, and immediately took off across country at a great rate. We called and called in vain. Four days later, about three in the morning, we heard delirious shouts of joy from the sleeping porch, where the four culprits were bunked: Tony had come home! He was dirty, forlorn, still reproachful, but glowing with joy at being home once more. When I recently saw the picture of "Lassie" in the movies, I lived over again that moving scene. "Tony" came again out of the past, this time very vividly. But he is never forgotten.

My husband's love of animals was reciprocated by many types and breeds, both domestic and wild, and there were many evidences of the existence of this mutual admiration society in the course of his long life. The most startling, however, was enacted one morning in Columbus just outside the State House yard at the entrance opposite the office of the *Ohio State Journal.* An impudent squirrel got my husband's wave length, jumped over the fence, and ran up the length of the friendly but unconscious back. At the collar's edge, which the squirrel pulled back with its paw, he deposited a little brown nut in the gap between the coat and shirt collar, and then scampered back to his perch. I almost did not believe the story myself when I told it later, although I saw the whole episode, but a *Journal* reporter happened to witness the scene and wrote it up in his paper the following day.

We made the trip back and forth from the office in every possible way: on foot, once in a while on the traction car, and frequently with a horse and buggy. But by far the most exhilarating mode of transport for us was the old red box sled, with our current "Nellie" attached. The back of the sled was a mere six inches high and between it and the dash, six feet away, there was plenty of room for forced ventilation; room for an unobstructed view of the great out-of-doors (provided one had time to glance at it); and room for serious thought about the Hereafter! This highly democratic and dangerous mode of travel exactly suited my husband. He was an ardent Democrat. Thomas Jefferson and Andy Jackson were his boon companions, so to speak, and we just had to be democratic. I admit it hurt my pride to step into that thing. It was the counterpart of my earlier feeling about the family telescope. But my faint murmurs of protest were completely drowned out by my husband's eloquent oratory on the pristine snow, the crisp fine air, the vivid black and white of familiar scenes as they flashed by. "Nellie" was an enthusiastic participant on these excursions. His (Yes! "his") tall, lean angular form fairly quivered with anticipation when he saw the old red sled emerge from its shed. And from that moment on the world belonged to the "Judge" and "Nellie." I confess now at this late date a definite nostalgia for those moments.

Now, *my* emotions are more readily stirred by spring. To spring I am a confirmed addict. Once I even wrote a poem on the subject, and this is as good a place as any to insert it. For, you will remember, I did start this epic with the idea of publishing *only* poems. There has to be some central idea even in this book:

## SPRING

Hark! 'tis the fairies softly calling,
Just without our cabin door.
Come and join the swelling chorus
Of God's great out-of-doors!
Where amidst the lacy foliage of the trees,
And the sweet twittering of the birds,
We may learn life's precious lesson,
In the sharing of the richness of our souls.
That as the lowly dandelion and lovely jonquil
Rear their golden bloom,
And with their floral neighbors
Share the splendor of their coloring
With the modest violet hue,
So may we too, at the Master's touch,
Share the majestic symphony of Creation,
And with the glory of the Infinite
Become one harmonious soul.

We had started to build our first home before we were married, and upon its completion one of my husband's daughters was married. The second year the wedding bells rang again—this time for his other daughter, who was to be married at home. As the society page always says, it was to be a "quiet wedding but lovely in its appointments." And so it was—but only in a way. We were all busy decorating the house for the ceremony, when the adjective "quiet" suddenly and from then on became obsolete for our purposes. The cateress and her assistants had prepared most of the wedding feast at her own home, and her grocer had contracted to carry the prepared food and the cooks to our home to finish off everything. Just as the delivery wagon arrived in front of our home, the traction car came along, caught the rear wheel in some fashion. and threw out all of the occupants together with the dinner onto the street.

Here was real diversion! We stopped decorating and salvaged what we could in the way of intact but shaken human beings, and far-from-intact dinner, from the wreck. By dint of quick thinking and a great deal of quick work we saved the day as far as food was concerned. We had recourse to the Butler's Pantry. Patty shells were hastily made and the family was advised to have only delicate appetites for cake, for only one layer had remained on the pan. It was cut in two, re-iced, and that part of the menu was Okay. They were advised to give their attention to the molded ice-cream dainties, a very attractive confection. They were intact and had survived the crash. The host and hostess had arranged a few signals to be used in case of an emergency to be flashed back and forth to both ends of the festive board, and "all was well on the Potomac."

It was then time for the bride and the matron of honor to speed away to don their wedding finery, and I was left among the trailing smilax to tie up all loose ends. I did succeed in powdering my nose, however, and in fulfilling my mother's prediction that I would never, *never* be late to dinner.

The bride of this story, Winifred Abernethy Brown, is a fine person, a jewel of many talents. Her hobbies are the three correlated arts, music, literature, dancing. As she listens to her phonograph she dreams a picture of what the music represents. So she dreams her stories hidden in music, and entertains with pantomime and music, which will surely some day lead her to fame and fortune.

She has many fine poems and articles of interest that have been published. She once tried to persuade her father to come to her home to recuperate from an illness by sending him the following lines which she had penned:

My Dear Dad:

If I could only have my way
I'd send you posies every day.
Roses and forget-me-nots.
I'd fill a garden every day.
In the garden there'd be a pool
Where gold fish swim in waters cool;
A comfy chair amidst your flowers
Where you could sit and dream for hours.
There'd be a path where you would walk
With your old friends, and you would talk
About the bees and butterflies,
About the trees and lovely skies.
Oh yes, there'd be a funny squirrel
And in your lap he'd sometimes curl;
He'd play around for hours and hours;
He'd store his food among your flowers,
An oreol and robin red
Swing in the tree-tops overhead.
And on a branch this robin red
Would build a nice leafy bed
And in it lay three eggs of blue.
She'd raise her babies just for you.
Right over there, there'd be a nook
Where you would read perchance some book
That your child wrote—I think you heard
She wrote about a humming bird.
The glorious sun would shine all day;
He'd always drive the clouds away.
There'd be a refreshing rain, I think
To give the garden folks a drink.
You'd saunter 'neath the grand old trees
Doing things just as you please.
Here in your garden all day long
The birds would sing each his own song.
You'd feel such happiness and peace
You'd wish that life would never cease.
You'd read and sleep and dream all day
My dear, if I could have my way
I'd fill your garden with perfume
Your flowers would always be in bloom—
If I could only have my way.

—Your child,

April 2nd, 1931.

By the time we had planned and built our third house, I was already getting restless for new fields to conquer. I have never entirely recovered from the shock of discovering that I could never be a coloratura soprano, so partly springing from that disappointment I decided I'd be a composer. I didn't know much about the rules of harmony or counterpoint, but these details did not deter me. I had composed a little poem for my husband's birthday and decided to set that to music. I thereupon drummed out some suitable cords and sent the manuscript to a Philadelphia publisher for polishing and engraving. The publisher suggested that, in order to copyright my masterpiece, I would have to supply a name and establish a price. I hadn't thought of that; but since he had suggested an appropriate name, I let that ride without comment. I did think, however, that his sales price of fifty cents was abominably cheap for the fruits of my imagination and fervor.

My husband, whose ear for music was on the vague side, was nevertheless quite pleased with my efforts, highly pleased, in fact. We had some great moments at this period in our lives: no omissions, no faults, no hits, no errors, *no siree!*

In the first blush of pride in my achievement, I persuaded a friend of mine to sing my song in church, and invited all my other friends to come and hear. They came too, and in such numbers that I thought at last I had struck my stride. Several friends who attended that service, including the singer, survived the ordeal, and I have often laughed with them over my anticipated rise to fame.

The organist had noticed some weak points here and there in the performance, and with commendable collaboration, would step hard on the foot pedals to cover all ailments. I was somewhat startled at the effect this action produced but, all in all, the event provided me with one of my better moments.

The melody still haunts me. Perhaps when I am ninety I'll summon up courage enough to tinker again with those notes. The poem, however, will stand:

## THE LIVING CHRIST

I know that my Redeemer lives,
  Triumphant o'er the grave,
I know He lives for evermore,
  Awaiting us to save.

I know He bids us trust in Him,
  And rest in faith secure,
That He, His people will redeem,
  To live for evermore,

I know that my Redeemer lives,
  My heart has told me so,
And all my sins He will forgive,
  His pardoning love I know.

I know He'll wash all tears away
  And safe within His fold
He'll garner all His children dear,
  To rest 'mid joys untold.

I know that my Redeemer lives,
  All honor to His name!
I know He bids me rise and live,
  And all His mercies claim.

Then gather 'round the throne of God,
  His priceless truths to glean,
Secure in His enfolding arms,
  At rest in peace serene.

# IX

## *Wherein We Travel*

IF I HAD never owned an automobile my life would have been much simpler—and this tale much shorter. But, 'way back in the days when people walked far just to see a car chug past we bought an Overland. It was an early open model, of course, and involved a great amount of equipment for our persons, such as goggles, veils, and dust-coats! But the world was ours, and the wide open spaces fairly clamored for conquering.

It wasn't long before my husband decided to put this newly-acquired gadget to some practical and productive use, and he asked me whether I thought I could drive him to Lancaster where he had an appointment. I knew that I could drive on level ground but I had a few misgivings about hills. So I asked about hills between Circleville and Lancaster, and was told by my spouse that there were none. This error cost him much in the next few hours.

In the calm confidence that all would be well, and if it weren't I could always stop, I asked two house guests and my sister to accompany us. All went smoothly until I encountered a veritable Mt. Vesuvius about six miles out. My passengers were fully absorbed in the scenery and in the novelty of rolling along through the countryside, so they didn't notice that we were slowly but surely losing speed. But *I* did; and I worried the car along until we were about halfway up the hill. Then I guess I must have flooded the engine and used the wrong gear, for suddenly there I was in *reverse!* I had ōnly a speaking acquaintance with the brake at best, and in this crisis I apparently completely ignored its existence. I cast a harried glance about me There to the left was a deep, deep ditch, a sawmill beyond the fence, and a saw log lying prone across the ditch. We ultimately, and through no skill of mine, backed into the log which fortunately held firm but which left us tipped up at a most tipsy angle. The running board on my right was on an exact level with the roadway, which caused technical complications—but we were still alive.

Two of my passengers were calm in the face of danger and gave me heartwarming evidence of their faith in my skill. My

other two passengers took a different attitude, and each reacted according to his own personality. My sister did not stop to open



the door—she just leaped over it at lightning speed. She is quite tall and it meant a mere handspring for her. But she had made one miscalculation; she had not noticed the close proximity of the car to the road, which seemingly had come up to meet her! Well, the unexpected impact laid her out flat, as though she were trying to match her length with that of the car. When she tried to rise she looked like a jack-knife at half-mast, for at that particular moment, my husband, offended, and properly so, thought he had better alight. This he did with great dignity, but he made the fatal error of opening his door while looking at me and fell over my sister. He couldn't have missed her if he had tried, so she had to take the count again. They were in, what I would call for want of a better word, juxtaposition.

Believe it or not, neither one displayed the slightest sense of humor; and both were completely articulate. They turned on me such a blast of adjectives and vociferous language that I was almost reduced to atoms. I was completely annihilated. In the end it was I who had to climb the hill on foot, which I did unaccompanied. My passengers were not hurt, but they were not very comfortable either. I finally rounded up a friendly farmer and persuaded him to come to our aid with a team of horses. He seemed to know me and obligingly hitched up his team. I told him what had happened, and we walked down the hill very slowly so that I could retrieve what I could of my dignity. We succeeded in pulling the car out, and I started her up the hill. I assured my passengers, meanwhile, with a perfectly sober face that now that I was in *low* gear I would just have to go forward, and that I was sure I could make the grade. On reaching the top we turned tail, however, and descended that hill at an amazing pace, headed in the right direction for home. At

this late date I really do not know what became of my husband's appointment. It must have been postponed indefinitely—an adjourned session, in court language.

Another incident that has lingered in my mind recalls the potential danger to which we may be exposed without knowing it. Far from being discouraged by the hill-climbing incident, I took my family to see the Bainbridge Caves, not far from Circleville. We went in over a narrow wagon trail, and found the caves very convincing. On coming out, there was a little trickle of water running over the road I had not noticed in entering, and which caused me to pause, as it looked slippery. As I glanced to my left, I discovered to my great astonishment a sheer precipice screened by weeds. The thought of starting the car and steering it over this spot struck terror to my heart, and I had to shift to neutral in emotions as well as gear before attempting the feat. To recall the experience makes me quake to this day.

On still another occasion, I had driven over to see a friend in the south apartment of Rose Terrace, North Court Street, and had just seated myself inside the door, when my friend said to me "Wealtha, is that your car?" I looked, and there she was, slowly but surely rolling down the street. The brake was on but not functioning very well. The car gained momentum and I tore after it with the vague notion that a "flying tackle" might stop it. I just had to get there, for about a hundred yards away the traction car was coming up the grade. The motorman had stopped his car, expecting to be hit, but about twenty feet away my car must have met some obstacle in the street, for it went slowly at an angle, and I had time to reach through to the wheel and gently guide it to an electric light pole where it parked itself gently and firmly. That pole, I regret to say, is still known as Abernethy's exclusive property.

Of course, we took many, many trips and traveled thousands of miles without having any untoward incidents at all; our cars were sources of great pleasure as well as excitment. To prove this, perhaps I had better share with you a bit of experience which came to mind when I related the hill-climbing incident. Just at the crest of that hill a blind client of my husband lived in a little cabin. We often maneuvered the car to the summit (after I had gained more experience) to drop in on him. There he would be, rocking and singing to himself. His utter contentment was always a source of strength to us whenever we saw or thought of him. He had a

wide knowledge of the classics, which he had read in Braille, and kept current on things cultural by reading Braille journals.

Once I asked him how he coped with the chores of housekeeping, and was assured that everything was well under control, but that he had pondered a long time over making pies! "Then," he said, "I hit upon the plan of defeating all the critters simply by making my pies at night!"

But to return to the main thread of this subject—it was shortly after the experience on the hill that I made the interesting discovery that Henry Ford had a fine model with *no gears* and not much of anything else. When one day I saw from the office window a driver who was apparently having no difficulty whatever in going either forward or backward without taking his hands off the wheel or bothering about a gear, I decided that this was the car for me. The Overland was sold and the Model T Ford purchased. It had six successors, the last being an eight-cylinder De Luxe Coupe, with an engine too powerful for its body: Which brings me to the next episode.

With myself at the wheel of that Ford dreams were coming true, and I was going to be exceedingly careful. But one fatal day, as I was coming down Water Street (the only street in Circleville with even a billow in it), I let two cars pass, and then made my turn to the left. And suddenly there was a freight car that had slipped up on me! It was twilight, and the car had neither a light nor a whistle. I turned sharply but not in time to escape entirely, for the fender of the freight car caught me up, carried me gently along for about a hundred feet, and then tossed me over in the yard of the filling station. I just missed the station by inches. I was moderately shaken, and more than a little disturbed! The traction company paid the damages, but for a few moments I was sure that I was headed straight for oblivion. In any event I was sent to bed for a rest.

Later, my niece and I went out in the country to witness and deliver a will, and on our way home the rear wheel parted company with us. It rolled on for about fifty feet, then bounced up, and went through the two top wires of a fence and landed in a pasture field! Believe it or not, Mr. Ripley.

Did I stop there? I did not! One evening I took another flier. A member of our household had gone into town to attend evening services, and feeling that it was a long walk for her, I decided to

go after her in the car. Just as I reached the main square, I thought I saw her and slowed up a little, perfectly oblivious of the fact that I was not the only one entitled to the use of the highway. I did not see a horse and buggy, for instance, with two girls and a young man sitting on their laps, driving. We met in beautiful style. I hit the rear wheel of the buggy; the man jumped out; the girls fell out; and the horse ran away! First thing I knew there was a policeman on my running board, urging me to help catch the horse. Well, the horse was off like the wind. As we got to one corner he was turning up another, and we chased the animal around four squares before we tried strategy. We then read the horse's mind and met him head on. By this time there were about fifty men with waving coats trying to shoo him over to the curb. Almost as if to seek company in his anxiety he came right up to my car. We didn't speak the same language, yet I am sure he had something he would have liked to say to me, but as I grasped the bridle, he jerked back my arm at such an angle that it was practically dislocated. So back I went again to bed to recover from "strain" of all kinds. Yes indeed!

It took me years, but I finally lived down my early reputation as a "Rough Rider," and we wore out the next five cars without experiencing anything very drastic. But with my proud little eight cylinder De Luxe, the one with the powerful and self-willed motor, I took one more flier and this proved to be last— it came within an ace of delivering me directly before an altar. I had driven up before my church in Circleville, had placidly parked the car in the second parking space, since the first one was already taken, and after the service had asked a friend whether I could drive her home. I was a bit startled when she showed considerable hestitation and asked me whether I was sure I was a safe driver. But she finally got in, and I turned on the switch. To my horror, the car bolted full steam ahead, leaped over the street curb, pavement, lot curb, and up the incline, and came to rest between the church and the parsonage about fifty feet back in the yard against a wire fence. The people who had just left the service to gather for a few minutes before the church door scattered like a flock of chickens in a storm to get away from the oncoming car. As for myself, I had only a split second to think, and I concentrated simply on missing the door of the church! I had left the car *in gear*, of course. Well, I had a crowd, you may be sure. Many men were awaiting their families coming from church, and they obligingly spoke their piece, but one and all were sympathetic. They turned the car around for me and headed it for home.

I looked around for my friend, for I felt in need of company, but she was gone—lost to me for life as a passenger, I might add. I arrived home all right, and the ever-obliging Dr. Jones, my neighbor, prescribed a *rest* again.

Had I parked my car in that first parking place nothing could have prevented me from going right up the steps into church, and casualties certainly would have resulted. But I am convinced the Good Lord was at that wheel, and saved me from a lifetime of regret. Later, in bemoaning the fact that such an accident should have happened to me, a lawyer friend observed that he thought "I was a splendid driver to have missed the church door by but a few yards." (His language was a little more colorful, but I wish to be ladylike!) This was much like the remark of the lady at the baseball game for the first time: "My goodness! What a clever pitcher that man is. He hits the bat every time!"

Well, this was a miraculous escape. I sold the car. But now that the war is over, maybe I could buy a jeep. I would have to rattle around in it in solitary splendor, though, for no one would take a chance. I suppose I shall never drive again, but you can see how poignantly symbolic it is for me to have been parked at a desk in the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

My family felt a little better since I could play around with cars where I worked, without driving them. They have freely predicted that I shall not die decently in my bed. But I tell them not to worry too much; if I am once more involved physically in a motor vehicle accident they can simply turn the case over to the legal department in my family; if maimed, they shall call in the family doctor and surgeon; all evidence can be analyzed by our scientists and professors; and the secretaries can take the necessary notes. But above all they must be sure to sue the driver, for they would need the money. I never had anything *much* lying around loose. If I should fail to recover, there were also conveniently in the family an undertaker, a minister, a bishop, and a singer. The Army and Navy representatives could see that proper discipline was maintained and all would be well with the earthly remains of one more passionate automobilist!

It was after the church incident that I wrote the following poem out of sheer thankfulness over my providential escape and deeply conscious of the Lord's care of me during the many times of unseen danger.

As a diversion and change from our meanderings and adventures with the current car, an ocean voyage seemed to us once to

## *PRAYER*

Come! 'tis the Saviour calling,
Seeking entrance to our hearts.
Let us kneel in adoration,
Hear God's message of redemptive love.
And in the sweet intimacy of prayer,
Lay humbly at His footstool
Our burdens and our cares.
In the nearness of His presence,
How sweet to know He'll understand,
Forgive His wandering children,
Through the ministry of prayer.
And with the full compassion of the Infinite,
Whisper softly "Forgiven,
God understands and cares."
Love divine, how precious,
Revealing love sublime,
Laying His dear hands in benediction
When we kneel to Him in prayer.
Spread afar His wondrous message,
Of the ransomed soul!
When we seek Him in repentance,
When we kneel to Him in prayer.

be just the thing. So we traveled down to Norfolk, Virginia, and boarded a vessel of the "Dollar Line" for Boston. It was just at twilight that we viewed the receding skyline of Norfolk against the most superb sunset I have ever seen. The sun went down a blazing ball of fire. This scene, the playing of the band, and all the atmosphere of a ship's departure inspired in me great enthusiasm and emotion. I could hardly wait until morning came to see what life was really like on board ship! I was up bright and early. For the first time I did the inadvertent goose step one has to adopt in order to walk at all on a heaving ship. As I went down the corridor to the steps leading to the dining room below, I was constantly being brought up short to meet the floor a few feet higher than I expected, and the next minute I was being gently propelled to the wall on the down grade, only to catch myself on the upgrade. It was astonishing how much territory one covered in that short walk, and the different varieties of steps one could achieve.

We finally arrived in the dining room, only to find that we had been given seats at separate tables. But we took that in our stride. The menu was all that could be desired, especially the luscious melon, which, I regret to add, has continued to be a stranger to my table from that day to this! The second course I never saw. For me it was a thing of the past even before it arrived. I made for the exit, and for the rest of the voyage I simply solved the problem of survival without food by staying quietly in our stateroom and conserving my energy. My husband was a good sailor and hung the whole time by the ship's rail to view the scenery and the passing boats. But as for me, in those three days and three nights of our voyage, I lived over my past, present, and future in something of a prayerful mood. It was awful to think that the boat wouldn't stop even if I died! So there wasn't much point in passing out.

When we landed, finally, I sat up only at the last minute, and then painfully edged my way along to the gangplank, deck chair by deck chair. After I had planted my uncertain feet on good old Mother Earth again, I was let in on the information that we had just passed through a hurricane that had swept down the entire Atlantic seaboard! I knew that it must have been something unusual, but no matter what it was, I vowed never voluntarily to engage in any more encounters with water in great quantities! I did, though, just *once* more, because my husband and I were so anxious to go to Canada. So we crossed Lake Erie. *That* really did finish it for all time. No more voyages for me!

My first trip was when my mother went to Cincinnati to purchase her millinery supplies; I was but an infant so she took me along. She traveled by way of the old Canal Boat then very popular, but I was too young to observe what must have been a very interesting mode of travel, as the horses pulled the boat along the tow path; and when necessary the boat lowered by means of what was known as "Locks" that it might wander on its way.

Mother only told me in later years, results of her journey; she said she had left me with a friend at the hotel whom she found in tears on her return. I would not stay "put," in spite of a sugar pacifier procured from the *dining* room. She said she knew then I would be a singer as my voice had such "carrying qualities."

When traveling I usually have to hold down a reclining chair or occupy the back seat of an automobile along with the baggage.

Once, my husband and I on a trip east invited my mother and her friend to accompany us. While in New York mother stopped to read all the bronze plaques on the buildings identifying their pioneer owners, and her friend had a bad time acting as liaison officer, keeping mother and ourselves in sight at the same time. We called at Grant's Tomb and I left my umbrella, but we proceeded on our sight-seeing trip from the top of a sight-seeing bus, and forgot the incident as being but a minor casualty.

Later, we decided to visit a famous museum and view the freaks and wax works. In the lobby mother spied a policeman and thought she would get some inside information—a sort of line-up of what we should see. She held forth very earnestly with that policeman, and at great length. From the side-lines we watched the scene in a riot of silent mirth, for the policeman was only a *display wax figure* and of course, "could not talk back."

Later, the laugh was on me. I accidentally bumped against the *"Chief of Police."* I turned to make an apology but received a haughty stare. He had on all his badges and equipment, but his inner ear tube was out of commission—it too was of *wax.*

Mother was a grand character, a regular reservoir of knowledge, and when we arrived at home and heard her imparting facts and figures, and asked her where she had picked up all that information, she tartly reminded us that if we had not been galloping so fast, and had stopped to read what was on the "wall" we could have learned for ourselves the great background of an earlier age. We tried to sustain our part of the program with a description of the trip along the Hudson and the Palisades standing there in all their grandeur, but she had seen about everything that was to be seen, in the short time available.

# X

## *Rustic Ramblings*

IT WAS when we moved into our fourth home, a lovely colonial at the intersection of Court Street and Ringgold Pike, that we embarked upon pastoral adventure. We did it by stages, of course, and ultimately found ourselves—if not up to the ears—at least up to the elbows in earthy matters. The first stage was the cow. Or perhaps I should say the first stage was the large orchard in the rear of our new home which inspired my usually well-balanced husband to invest in a cow. The cow was a Jersey, and she seemed to symbolize for the Judge all that was good and prosperous in life. Now this placid animal was very generous with her product and plentifully supplied us, and some neighbors, too, with milk, cream, cottage cheese, butter and buttermilk. As a matter of fact, this bountiful cow gave too much milk, so my husband decided to sell her and buy a beautiful little "cream" cow he had heard about.

The only difficulty with this arrangement was that we hadn't managed to transfer the first cow before the "cream" cow arrived, so we harbored them both for a few days and I was pressed into service as an amateur milkmaid. I never rose above that level, either. I was never able, for instance, to make both hands produce milk at the same time; I used only the stripping method. Nor could I direct a stream of milk into a pail, so I had to guide the pail to the milk with one hand. This process was often very upsetting to the cow and once she retaliated by upsetting my full milk bucket.

Well, one of these evenings I had just carried the milk into the kitchen when the telephone rang and I had to return to the cowfold to consult with my husband about the message. We stood talking face to face when suddenly I felt a gentle but firm crush against my shoulder, and there was our private "Old Faithful" about to execute a hurdle over the Judge. How she had slipped up on us in this vicious mood so quietly and at such lightning speed remains unexplained. But my husband lay flat on the ground after the impact and I instinctively caught at the flying right hind foot to prevent it from landing on the prostrate figure.

After the cow and I—she on three legs—had come to a halting

stop, I glanced back at my husband to survey the damages. There were no physical ones to speak of, but I have never in my life seen him so mad! Up he rose with blood in his eye and wrath on his usually serene countenance and glared at the now peaceful bovine with righteous indignation. The cow enjoyed a comfortable margin of safety, but my husband soon eliminated that! He seized a piece of a clothes prop and took after the cow and finally hurled it at her



with all his strength. I, meanwhile, had seized another stick and joined in the race. What would have happened had we all three met at the same moment I hesitate to guess. But the upshot of the whole matter was that both cows were disposed of the next day, and we bought our butter thenceforth from the corner grocer.

With the failure of this initial effort to use the orchard, that part was sold. Now five or six beautiful homes grace the orchard facing on Northridge Road. But across the street were about thirteen acres of good pasture land belonging to a friend of ours, and I promptly began to dream a dream of my own little empire. Why not build houses on it? And this is how Circleville's Montclair Addition was born. Twenty-five beautiful homes now grace the Addition.

I communicated this daring thought to my young friend Thomas Stocklen, the grocer, and then he interested John Goeller, Jr., who in turn interviewed his brother Lawrence. Lawrence finally rallied Allen Thornton to our banner and there we were: five adventurers operating on a shoestring as far as capital was concerned. But our dreams were very rosy. My husband neither approved nor disapproved of our scheme, but we engaged him (without fee) for legal counsel, and he advised us to incorporate.

If we flopped, he sagely announced, the damage would thus be less than otherwise. Lawrence was president of our corporation, and I was secretary.

A Columbus architect, Mr. Charles Inscho, furnished a "technicolor" blue-print which won us all over. There were our houses all built, with the proper streets, approaches, entrances, etc. There remained only a few small details, such as financing! We met once, I know, for the specific purpose of naming the "baby." Many were the high-sounding, euphonious names put forth. But when one of the boys mentioned that he had attended college in Montclair, New Jersey, and liked that name, we were all agreeable. The name possessed a nice balance of vowels and sounded fine to us. The main avenue was also given that name. We assessed ourselves each a thousand dollars in stock, and helped ourselves to one lot apiece. I lost mine to a purchaser three times, however; I always seemed to have the lot most in demand.

Since I lived across the way and not in the Addition, I did not think I should participate in naming the streets, but after one of the boys named his street "Beverly Road" and the others couldn't think of a name, I chirped up with "Guilford Road"—and so it remained. I had always disliked the name "Ringgold Pike," so when we presented the Addition to the city council for acceptance I asked them to change "my" Ringgold Pike to Northridge Road. They agreed that the "North" part was all right, but where was the "ridge"? At that point I grew eloquent, and told them of my encounter with a considerable ridge the size of a mountain just six miles out—that hill of blessed memory where I had learned how to reverse for the first time, the highest point, I think, in Pickaway County! So Northridge Road it became.

Of all my efforts I believe the one which gave me the most pride and joy was that which resulted through the efforts of our firm in the sale to the City Council of the site for the location of Berger Hospital across the street from our Addition. I was convinced it was the most logical place: the ground lay high; the site was accessible from several roads; it was removed from traffic; and there was room for expansion. The lovely little hospital and its beautifully landscaped grounds have amply justified my hopes and efforts and are a distinct asset to our fair city.

Our next adventure took us even deeper into the country. We traded our house on Court and Northridge Road for a farm—my

*husband's* private dream of empire. It proved eventually to be something of a competitor to his law practice, but we managed to look after them both. Three of our tenant's grown children could not hear, and I had the time of my life communicating with them. We all enjoyed the experience. Out of my dusty past, probably the "Crack-the-Whip" era, I pulled our childish system of spelling our words on our fingers. All I had to do was to spell out a noun and the quick-witted youngsters immediately grasped my whole thought and would begin laughing and making lightning passes at one another and nodding to me at a great rate.

My coping with language was always on a primitive basis, but I managed somehow to get effects. My German cousin had his fianceé come to this country and they stayed with us several weeks after the wedding. She could speak no English and I knew only a few words of German. But I taught her some practical English very quickly by leaving slips of paper on all articles of furniture, naming each article, and by the time I returned home from the office in the evening she had mastered the words. I wanted her to hurry up and learn English so that I could hear about her experiences as a member of the immediate entourage of the Queen of Egypt, and of the summer vacations in the palace at Kuba and the winters in Cairo.

But to get back to the farm. The Judge reveled in his garden, especially the strawberry patch which seemed to grow so many weeds between our coming and going. After many a long and laborious day, with our backs and arms aching, we would pile into the Ford laden down with a proud strawberry or *two,* a few leaves of lettuce, beans, and a couple of eggs, and wearily wend our way home. I don't know that we ever counted the real cost of those fine hours, but we enjoyed them to the full.

When help was hard to get at corn-cutting time one year, I rose by the alarm at three-thirty in the morning, detached our car from hundreds of its fellows in the huge barn-like public garage near us, met our "hand" at Lovers' Lane, and got him to the farm by daybreak. My sole reward for this strenuous procedure was the series of glorious sunrises I saw. But who can count costs in these terms?

All these maneuvers, moves, and transplantings of ourselves and our energies used to confound my father, who lived with us at the time. Finally he rebelled, and in a typical manner. Shortly before we gave possession of the last house we had built, I missed

a lovely arbor vitae which my sister Minnie had given me on my fiftieth birthday, and which had long graced our front entrance. Nobody seemed to know anything about it, but father's grim silence seemed to direct the finger of suspicion toward him. After considerable prodding he confessed that he had given up hoping that permanency would ever become part of my existence, so he had removed the tree to his lot in the cemetery—or, as he put it, he had "taken it home." Later he planted some low-growing shrubs around it, and it stands there to this day, tall, straight, and defiant in its lovely setting—a sentinel standing guard over the loved ones who rest there.

# XI

## *Antiques—and Other Matters*

IT WAS while we were building the colonial house, our fourth home, that I learned to appreciate and respect fully the wood-craftsmen among our American ancestors. The collection of antiques, especially furniture, gradually fastened itself upon me and was a well estabished hobby before we decided to go pastoral.

I started out sedately enough with the "find" of a beautiful old davenport and six carved chairs, and from then on it was but a short skip to my great old grandfather clock, banquet tables, and a long mirror that hung on a cherry standard, tip-tops, and many chests. A climax was reached when I became the proud possessor of a drop-leaf mahogany table which had originally belonged to Governor Morgan of New York. Although other pieces of my collection are now scattered, this apple of my eye remains to solace my late years.

During my reconnoitering expeditions in search of additions to my growing collection I wandered into many strange places and had many amusing and interesting experiences. One of these still makes me shake with laughter whenever I think of it. I had rounded up a number of treasures in Columbus and was determined to take them all home with me in the car, come what may. When I finally got my car loaded I had a Lincoln desk wedged between the front and rear seats, a gate-leg table roped fast on one running board, and a poster bed on the other! I started for home about four-thirty in the afternoon along Route 23, which at that time was as full of chuckholes as a ribbon waffle. In order to keep my car in balance I had to ride smack down the crown of the road and choose the inevitable chuckholes with meticulous care. I simply had to ignore justly indignant tootings of horns and black looks from other drivers, and hold to my course with a tenacity born of an instinct for self-preservation. Every mile or so, I had to crawl out from behind the driver's seat, pick my way out through the labyrinth of ropes, and pull them all taut again. It seemed to me that the rope must have been made of *ersatz* rubber—it stretched and stretched with every jolt.

In spite of all these hurdles I arrived at the corporation line of Circleville just at dusk. I didn't dare drive through the streets looking as I did with all my plunder, so I turned in at the cemetery to await darkness. Then, as stealthily as the Arabs with their tents, I crept on at a snail's pace to the upholsterer's storeroom.

The bed I brought home that day must have belonged to John and Priscilla Alden, it was so ancient. A cord bed, at that. But the upholsterer and refinisher gave it his exclusive and loving attention for a long time before it was finally installed in our home. By the time the bed came into our lives, we had survived our farming enterprise, had built our fifth house for our tenant on the farm, and had lived a short time in the Page house; we then decided to move over into the first-floor apartment of a friend's home. Before remodeling, our bedroom had been a dining room, and at the end of the room was a bow window with a high transom in the center, and transom windows on each side. The windows were of stained glass, picturing great clusters of luscious grapes. Well, this was the setting for our bed of great antiquity. The bed was very high even without the new thick innerspring mattress and was designed obviously to accommodate a "lower-berth" trundle bed. In any event it deserved to be fitted with a step-ladder, like George Washington's bed at Mount Vernon.

One night, while snugly asleep in this bed, I dreamed that a bird flew through one of the transom windows and made for one of the grape clusters. This astonishing vision caused me to execute a neat handspring on the bed. One foot landed on the window sill, preparatory to my flight out of the window, when all of a sudden the side boards and the head board of the bed parted company and caused me, my sleeping partner, all our bed clothes, and the mattress to slide unceremoniously downhill to the floor. Our heads were down, our feet up, and in the blur of sleep and the confusion of things on top of us we could not climb up, slide down, or reverse to safety! There was nothing to do but call for help. Which we did! Our slumbers continued on the new mattress, needless to say, and John and Priscilla's bed went in for an overhauling.

My adventures in sleep, if anything, overshadow my adventures in daylight! When traveling, we were always obliged to collect all available furniture and sofa cushions to place in front of the hotel windows for fear I should want to make a handspring into the unknown. One time, I was having such a lengthy discussion with someone in my dreams that my sister and brother-

in-law had to remove the hinges from the door to get in and put a stop to it. It is just such aberrations of the mind that keep my family in hot water! I can roll out of bed unconsciously with remarkable alacrity. My sister has suggested that, while her grandchildren are not using the baby bed, we might put the mattress on the floor beside my bed so as to avoid my striking the nearby mantel and hearth which are rather formidable, as I have found out when we have collided. I told my chief of this thoughtful arrangement one day, and he said, "Why stop with the mattress? Why not use the whole bed?"

My husband always held himself quite aloof from my latest hobby. He neither abetted nor aided; he also did not hinder, which was convenient. But one day, upon entering the house unnoticed, I found him in company with several of his colleagues busily turning my furniture upside down and wrong side out to see whether the pieces were glued or clamped, and the Judge was merrily chatting away about my treasures with the air of an experienced collector! My Puritan pulpit table even brought our dignified Dr. Jones down on his knees—and he was an expert on antiques. I mentioned to him once that it had a secret compartment, and he vowed not to leave the house until he found it. He did.

This hobby provided a diversion of no mean proportions, even aside from the pleasure of making the collection. It was my wont occasionally to provide each of my pieces with an imagined *original owner,* and we would have long and entertaining hours together.

It was my love of things antique also that, not many years ago, took me as stated before on a trip to New Orleans and St. Augustine, the antique-lover's heaven. And I had a heyday viewing the unspeakably beautiful displays on every hand in these cities. But my most remarkable experience was connected with an antique hotel in St. Augustine, where I changed rooms three times in the course of a night trying to find one that had less than six doors to it. I didn't find one! All hotels in St. Augustine that were open at the time were just as antique and as perforated with doors. So I stayed on, but I couldn't go to bed without first placing the bureau in front of one, an umbrella in the transom of another, a washstand against another, suitcases against two, and finally the bed itself against the sixth! Even then I didn't sleep. There was a tropical storm to add to my discomfort, and down there when it rains, it rains!

While discussing hobbies, I might as well include here the one

episode which occurred as a result of one of my husband's hobbies: politics. He got the idea that I would make a good clerk of court, so I wound up in the election as a member of the also-ran class. At midnight I was elected, and in the morning I wasn't. Not that I minded, especially, but what did surprise me was the fact that fidelity to party politics held above friendship, and the eighteen Republican members of my bridge club of twenty-four ladies were, like Japan, "so sorry," and could not lend me even one vote. But I come a close second, and that was that. It was a *primary* election, and the girls thought I would not need *their* votes.

After my husband's death I scattered out my energies somewhat. Some projects were successful and some were not. I especially enjoyed, however, a period as secretary to the prosecuting attorney with whom I remained throughout his four-year term of office. He was a Republican and I Democrat, but politics never raised an issue between us. We jointly built a little Cape Cod house, which could accommodate his family and myself, and where I thought I would remain. My cousin, a landscape architect from Columbus, landscaped it. Later I decided to make my home with my sisters in Columbus, Ohio, and to accept a position with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, so I regretfully took leave of the little house. Circleville, to me, however, is still "Home."

# XII

## *Reveries*

OF MY really, *really* private life, I have as yet given no inkling, although to those who know me the symbol is as evident as my snub nose! I wear my "ears" on or just under my dress front, and, when I want especially to get every word, I hold them in my hand and scoop the words out of the air. And when I wish to retire from the busy, noisy, or unpleasant world, all I have to do is to click off my "ears," and there I am securely and inevitably dedicated to my own thoughts and my own inner life. I call my little device my "Charlie McCarthy," and I am very fond of him indeed, and I have grown not only to tolerate, but even to appreciate his services when he is turned off as well as when he is turned on!

About this vast and beautiful world of silence, my dear friend and former teacher, Mrs. Howard Jones, has written most eloquently. To this woman of great talent, charm, and human resourcefulness, I wish here to pay the highest tribute! She has graciously permitted me to insert in this booklet one of her poems.

An unexpected source of one of the richest and, humanly speaking, the most pleasurable experiences of my life was opened up to me when I came to Columbus ten years ago to take a three months' appointment in the Motor Vehicle Bureau of the Ohio State Department of Highways. When these three months elapsed I remained on in my position through three administrations. But these "late" years in my life have been made happy largely through my associates in my work.

I loved my colleagues and they tolerated me even to the point of lending a hand now and then with this Epistle to the Brethren. For instance, I offered a prize of a stick of chewing gum to the one who could produce the best picture of our run-away cow as an illustration for the episode a few chapters back. I had an *amazing* response, and although I could not, for many reasons both *artistic* and *gentlewomanly,* use the illustrations offered, I shall treasure them along with the good will of their donors.

In my connection with the Bureau I suffered only one major

## *RESIGNATION*

To walk the earth in silence,
Not to hear the voice of friends
In tones familiar. This my fate.
And must I bow my head
And murmur "All is well"?
Seek my pleasure in quiet things;
Draw content from passive things,
Nor mingling with the noisy throng
That chatters 'long life's highways,
Quiet the impulse to join with listeners
To sweet music.
To hear the accents of the human voice
Sweet instrument of social life;
To dwell apart and make a new environment.
Must I sit apart when wit and repartee
Are passing freely 'round the festive board
Nor take no part in it?
Must I miss the mating song of birds?
The evening chirping of the Katy-dids?
The murmur of the wind a'midst the tree tops
And the gentle patter of the falling rain?
All this I bear, and yet I am not sad.
So many joys are all around me;
The blooming flowers, the faces sweet of loved friends
The shining rainbow 'gainst a cloud of black,
Bright plumage of birds that flit from tree to tree,
Until, when time has merged into eternity
My dulling ears shall open to the music of the spheres.

—*Mary McM. Jones*



disappointment. Recently the Department spread itself into rooms which were formerly the Ball Room and Hall of Mirrors of the old Hartman Hotel. There my lucky colleagues frisk about with their typewriters and their files and papers under the beautiful dome and frescoed ceilings replete with cupids and airily-clad ladies playing harps, whereas I, with my love for the antique and the beautiful, was left behind in the old fortress of files. I felt something like Moses must have felt when he was not permitted to enter the promised land; but since so many good friends were left behind with me, I still considered myself relatively fortunate! As compensation, I purchased a private mirror for my own gratification and labeled the aisle through which I passed to my desk "Antique Avenue"—so I was squared on this count.

A high moment in my office "home" was reached on the day I passed by five the prescribed three-score years and ten! For a few hours of treasured memory my colleagues and I became all one age in the spirit of true and valued friendship. The superb flowers that marked that dramatic occasion contained a fragrance that will last long beyond their death and will not perish until my own.

I trust you will indulge and forgive me for the personal touch which I have used in this book; it would have been difficult for me to have done otherwise.

Some reminiscences are of manners and customs quite old, but memory is active and I know many friends share them.

It is in a spirit of humble and great thankfulness to my God that I acknowledge in my own way the privilege of having been permitted to round out many full years of life.

My seventy-seventh birthday was celebrated as is usually the custom in my family with a candle on the breakfast table and a favorite menu to accompany it. This was no exception to the rule for there at my plate was the traditional candle, Aunt Jemima's smiling face as a place card and her delicious cakes with maple syrup, as the menu. As seventy-seven candles were too many to place on the cake prepared for the occasion I was provided with a bottle of 7 Up to supply the "atmosphere" and a list of seventy-seven questions as to its probable use.

At the Department many cards and lovely American Beauty roses were given me by my warm friends. Shortly afterwards I retired. But retirement has its compensations. I have celebrated

another birthday, same time, same station, same candle and lavender hyacinth, a favorite menu and a Candy Cane to lean on.

I have retired to the old rocking chair beside the hearth and have ceased to be a "Joiner."

I am in demand at twilight, though, for the youngsters of the household who want stories and lullabys. It is thrilling to live over again the days of our youth, and as we rock and knit and knit and rock, we too would like to take a "refresher course."

The little dears are not so very exacting; just satisfied and contented if you get in on the ground floor with them, furnish the proper backdrop for mystery, fun and tragedy, especially if you recite for them their favorite:

"There is a little artist
Who paints on the window pane,
Pictures of snow-white mountains
Where picnic ships sail by.
The moon is the lamp he paints by
His canvass the window pane,
His brush is the frozen snow-flakes
Jack Frost is the artist's name."

Then if you take them one by one, you may be able to trace the future historians, professors and politicians, and maybe even a president among them. If you can sing a little, even if off key, the dear old "Listen to the Mocking Bird," "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," "Mary Had a Little Lamb," and wind up with that old favorite of mine:

"Little Drops of Water
Little Grains of Sand
Make a Mighty Ocean
And a *B-U-T-I-F-U-L* Land,"

you may see the sandman's approach in the gentle flutter of the little eyelids and as you softly murmur—your childhood's prayer:

"Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray Thee Lord my soul to keep
If I should die before I wake
I pray Thee Lord my soul to take"

we may with curtains of tears in our own eyes turn back with a H'M-Hi, in spirit at least to life's yesterdays, with the consoling thought that the glorious Hope of all ages bids us look forward and upward, too, to the last fulfillment: *ETERNITY!*

For as the shadows lengthen,
Advancing years come on apace;
Busy lives must cease.
Ours to gain the heights
Where men can live like men.
And then as life's curtain
Shall softly enfold us,
And we find ourselves
As tired little children,
When at the evening hour
'Round our mother's knee
We knelt and asked the Lord
"Our souls to keep."
Looking forward, not backward,
When the final curtain shall descend,
And we gentle fold our tents
And steal away,
May we have heard the Saviour's
Clarion call,
Come, there is no death!

*Sic Transit Gloria Mundi*

Wealtha Vieth Abernethy

